

**THE MAGAZINE FOR GYPSIES, ROMA & TRAVELLERS**

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# TRAVELLERS TIMES

## WE ARE FAMILY

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ERADICATION OF SCOTTISH TRAVELLERS | YTT





2018 HAS  
BROUGHT  
WITH IT A  
WAVE OF  
GYPSY  
ROMA AND  
TRAVELLER  
YOUTH  
RECLAIMING  
THEIR  
IDENTITY

Welcome to issue 64 of The Travellers' Times magazine. It's been a busy year for YTT (Youth at Travellers Times), from running animation workshops with Romani and Traveller young people about our longstanding history in Britain to launching and announcing the winner of our Big Creative Writing and Poetry Competition. Upcoming writer, 16 year old, Ruby Leigh-Smith was our overall competition, winner; check out her story on page 13.

With women's equality issues being firmly in the media spotlight this year, we decided to pack the pages of the Autumn/Winter 2018 issue of Travellers' Times with stories about women and girls breaking down barriers, crossing boundaries and leading the way.

On page 6, read about Ivy Manning, FFT's Community Engagement Officer – and your link to the politicians who support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller rights. In our centre spread, pages 8 & 9, TT Editor Mike Doherty goes to meet Josephine Smith and her family.

On page 14 Young Romani activist Lois Brookes-Jones writes "We shouldn't have to hide our cultural identity to receive basic respect." However she rejects the narrative of us being the victims and she's not alone; 2018 has brought with it a wave of Gypsy,

Roma and Traveller youth reclaiming their identity and taking ownership of all that it means to be 'Gypsy'.

On page 12 meet Traveller-led organisation Tome Anosha leading on change in Northern Ireland and find out about ACERT's Romani and Traveller women's activism event that took place in London in September. You can see photos on page 15 from Travellers' Times' visit to Appleby Fair this year where we met up with some of our readers and joined forces with the European Roma Rights Centre to support the launch of Roma Rights Defenders, a European activist network.

The mainstream media representation of Gypsies and Travellers continues to focus on 'unauthorised camps' and much of the press continues to depict us as invaders, terrorising local communities and leaving chaos and destruction in our trail with no real sense of belonging, but let's use the TT to remind them that we belong to British society as much as British society belongs to us. I hope that this issue brings a sense of pride that shines from these pages into your heart, like sunshine through the gaps in the cloud on a dark winter day.

Across the UK Gypsy and Travellers are mobilising, they want a seat at the table and are demanding 'nothing about us without us'. I will leave you with the words of Romani Professor Ian Hancock who said: 'Danger, Educated Gypsy!'



MEMBERS OF THE WELL WOMAN GROUP

## GAINSBOROUGH WELL WOMAN GROUP – ALL IN IT TOGETHER!

A women's health and community group in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, is bringing Traveller and non-Traveller women together to keep healthy and to take part in good causes.

Some of the group recently took part in a gruelling five kilometre run through the rain and the mud and raised £300 for Cancer Research.

The Gainsborough women also do good deeds in the local community and have been nominated for a prestigious 'Heroes' community award from Asis – itself an award winning housing association.

The nomination for the award reads: "Gainsborough Well Woman group are changing the lives of people in their community. They are helping people to lose weight, be healthier, have fun together and share their problems. The group tackle mental health issues, reduce isolation and are raising money for children with cancer. The group's work is spreading through whole families, to young and old alike."



THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN BRUSSELS

## UK GOVERNMENT FAILS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ITS GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES – SAYS NEW REPORT

UK FAILURE TO ESTABLISH A ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGY IS "WORRYING ON MANY LEVELS", SAYS THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF GYPSY LIAISON GROUPS.

A new report, 'Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in the United Kingdom', has highlighted the failure of successive governments to integrate the UK's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

The report, prepared by the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups; Friends, Families and Travellers; Roma Support Group and Roma Community Care Derby, was part of the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, 'Capacity-building for Roma civil society and strengthening its involvement in the monitoring of National Roma Integration Strategies'.

Siobhan Spencer MBE, from the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, said that the lack of progress was "worrying".

"We will not improve the level of equity for Gypsy Traveller and Roma communities unless there is a concrete time line with adequate resources put in place," she added. "To date it is worrying at the lack of progress that has been made on many levels."

## BUTLIN'S SETTLES TRAVELLER DISCRIMINATION COURT CLAIMS

The Travellers' Times can reveal that the holiday camp giant, Butlin's, has settled out of court after being accused of discriminating against Travellers.

The settlements were made last summer after discrimination claims were lodged with the courts by lawyers working with Traveller claimants. The Travellers claimed that Butlin's had broken equalities laws when they refused them service.

Butlin's first landed in hot water over Travellers in 2016 when the Traveller Movement reported Butlin's to the Equalities watchdog alleging that they had discriminated against their Irish Traveller client.

The TT approached Butlin's and asked whether Travellers were welcome. A Butlin's spokesperson answered: "Butlin's has always welcomed guests from all parts and communities of the UK and beyond, provided those on the booking meet our terms and conditions – these do occasionally change in order to ensure we always know the full identity of everyone staying on our resorts."



COVER PHOTO: Josephine Smith with one of her five daughters, Charmaine Abdul Karim and granddaughter Donna Abdul Karim © Jean Goldsmith

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## JAW JAW NOT WAR WAR: BILLY WELCH SMOOTHS OVER APPLEBY HORSE FAIR CONTROVERSY

**S**hera Rom Billy Welch has been meeting with local settled residents groups, the police and councillors to address complaints about last year's Appleby Horse Fair and to ensure its future as the annual 'Mecca for Gypsies and Travellers'.

TT community reporter Amanda Reed (nee Cunningham) went along to one of the meetings with Billy Welch to talk to the residents of Kirkby Stephen after many of them complained that there was lots of trouble there in the run up to the historic horse fair last summer. The trouble was then sensationalised in the national press leading to calls for the fair to be banned.

Billy Welch told the meeting that the traditional part of the fair he is responsible for – Fair Hill – has no trouble at all. The problem, he said, was that many more camping fields had been opened by local land-owners and the event had grown.

After the meeting Amanda Reed spoke to Kirkby Stephen councillors and residents and an event about Gypsy and Traveller history was mooted to help ease community tensions and bring the two sides together.

**By Mike Doherty and Amanda Reed**

## DORSET GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS TACKLE RACIST POLICE FACEBOOK POST



BETTY BILLINGTON CHAIR KUSHTI BOK  
© BBC

**D**orset Police have deleted a 'racist' post from their official Facebook page and apologised after they were challenged by a local Romany Gypsy campaigner.

The Facebook post appeared on North Dorset Facebook page and warned about buying goods from "traveller types" driving white or silver Transit vans. The post soon started gathering other racist comments from members of the public – including one that used the derogatory 'p\*key' word.

Betty Billington, chair of Dorset based campaign group Kushti Bok, was alerted by local Gypsies and Travellers who took exception to the post and contacted Dorset police with a complaint. Shortly afterwards, the police apologised profusely and swiftly deleted the post.

**By Mike Doherty**

FUTURE OF APPLEBY HORSE FAIR SECURED  
© NATASHA QUARMBY FIELDS OF LIGHT



ROGER GALLOWAY-SMITH DRIVES TRAINS FOR NORTHERN RAIL © EL POLLOCK, COMMONS WIKIPEDIA

## TRAVELLER TRAIN DRIVER SPEAKS OUT AT TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

**A** Traveller train driver and union member has spoken out for Gypsy and Traveller rights at a recent Black Workers Trade Union conference – and invited a leading GRT charity along to speak at next year's event.

Roger Galloway-Smith, the Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) Consultative Committee Member for the train drivers union ASLEF, received a standing ovation.

On behalf of ASLEF, the Armagh born Roger Galloway-Smith called on the Trade Union Race Relations Committee to demonstrate support in the organisation of Gypsy and Travellers' rights and said that a representative from Friends, Families and Travellers should be invited to the conference in 2019 to deliver a speech on the discrimination faced by Gypsies and Travellers.

Speaking to the Travellers' Times, Roger Galloway-Smith said that his ASLEF committee decided to put the motion to the conference after he was asked to tell them about life as a Traveller and the discrimination he and his community faced.

"Everyone was shocked and moved by what I had to say on the matter, and it was decided there and then to create a motion to put to the conference," says Roger.

**By Mike Doherty**

## STAFFORD PRISON CELEBRATE GYPSY, ROMA & TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH

Kyber (Kev) Edwards Boswell sent Travellers' Times this lovely painting for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month.

HM Prison Stafford held a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month event on the 4th June and raised just over £100 for the Katharine House Hospice in Stafford. Kyber (Kev) wrote in to tell us all about it. "I did talks and poems about our history and culture and the band did us proud with traditional music. Everyone enjoyed it. I think every prison should have a Gypsy and Traveller group," he said.



ONE OF THE PICTURES ON DISPLAY AT HMP STAFFORD'S GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH

## National Prison Radio

## BEYOND THE BARS WITH NATIONAL PRISON RADIO

in November called 'On The Road' which will support the audience in successfully reintegrating into society after release.

Presented by a recently released Traveller, the series of 24 programmes will include interviews, features and discussions and will highlight the work of a range of partner organisations.

On The Road will be broadcast on National Prison Radio as three series of 8 one-hour programmes over a one-year period. This will include a number of 'specials', enabling loved ones on the outside to write in with requests and messages, something of particular importance to prisoners experiencing difficulties maintaining family contact.

Following on from the success of 'Open Road', a new National Prison Radio series for GRT prisoners will be launched

A version of On The Road will also be made available as a free download (podcast) by family and friends of GRT prisoners who will also be able to contact National Prison Radio via an online form and/or social media.

A TT shout-out to the following prisons and the prisoners and GRT prisoner groups who have contacted the TT since the 2018 May edition of the TT Magazine: HMP Norwich, HMP Littlehey, HMP Manchester, Terry S HMP Frankland, Mark H HMP Wayland, HMP Oakwood, Dean M and The Traveller Group at HMP Wymott, HMP Glenochil, HMP Whatton.

## FFT RUN PRISONER HEALTH TRAINING

**F**riends, Families and Travellers recently ran an understanding personal health course for Gypsy and Traveller men in Her Majesties Prison (HMP) Ford.

The training is designed to develop understanding of personal health and wider health services, also looking at health inequalities. The content of the course is adapted and tailored specifically

for Gypsies and Travellers, covering health concerns and issues relevant to those communities and is fully accessible for those with low literacy.

All of the participants at HMP Ford passed the assessment for Level 1 Understanding Health Awareness training and want to go onto to 'RSPH Level 2 Understanding Behaviour Change' training. 'RSPH Level

2 Understanding Behaviour Change' is equivalent to one GCSE, supporting further study or employment.

One prisoner who completed the training said: "I was surprised to find out how many things are bad for you!"

FFT has been contacted by another prison requesting the training and the Level 2 training will be held at HMP Ford later on in the year.





## FFT SET TO ORGANISE MEETINGS WITH POLITICIANS – COME AND GET INVOLVED SAYS IVY MANNING!

FFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER IVY MANNING © MIKE DOHERTY/TT

**F**riends, Families and Travellers (FFT) are asking for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma to get in touch if they are interested in meeting with the politicians who work in Parliament to support the campaign for their rights and recognition.

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers is co-chaired by Kate Green MP and Baroness Whitaker, who took over running the group following the death of Traveller's champion, the late Lord Avebury. FFT were recently appointed as the secretariat for the APPG and are responsible for providing the admin and co-ordination for the group –and making sure the politicians who belong to it are in touch with issues affecting GRT communities.

Speaking to the Travellers' Times, Ivy Manning said that her new role as FFT's Community Engagement Worker would involve her organising meetings with the cross-party parliamentary group secretariat and encouraging Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to get involved.

"Earlier this year I attended Parliament's Train the Trainer programme which will help me to learn about the work and processes of Parliament in order to fulfil my new role as Community Engagement Worker for the APPG," said Ivy Manning.

"This role is to keep a two-way flow of information between community members and parliamentarians. This is a great opportunity for community members to keep informed about

the work that the APPG members are involved in and to raise any concerns from the community. I will be organising three meetings this year, including a youth focussed event, and if you are interested in getting involved please contact me!"

Baroness Whitaker, Co-Chair of the group said - "The APPG with the excellent support of FFT can now really have an impact not only on parliamentary and government opinion but enable effective leadership to develop further among the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities - which is the best way to get a hearing and do away with discrimination."

Ivy Manning can be contacted by email at [ivy@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto:ivy@gypsy-traveller.org)

There is a page on the FFT website dedicated to the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. To keep up to date with what the politicians are doing please follow this link: [www.gypsy-traveller.org/appg](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/appg)

**By Ivy Manning**



### WHEN IS A TRAVELLER NOT A TRAVELLER?

**TEL: 0121 685 8677**  
**MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9AM–5PM**

The answer is when the Government decides they are not. The new definition of Gypsy and Traveller for planning purposes brought in by the Government since August 2015 excludes those Gypsies and Travellers who have stopped travelling permanently because of age, disability or ill health. The Travellers Advice Team (TAT) at Community Law Partnership (CLP) are very keen on taking challenges to this outrageous change in the definition of Gypsies and Travellers.

TAT provides advice and representation to Gypsies and Travellers throughout England in the following areas:-

- Evictions from unauthorised encampments
- Evictions from rented sites (local authority, housing association and private)
- Serious disrepair on rented sites
- High Court Planning Appeals
- Planning Injunctions
- Stop Notices and direct action
- Homelessness (including for those in houses who need a pitch)
- Allocation of pitches on local authority sites
- Cases for boata dwellers especially concerning the Continuous Cruising Guidance



The Community Law Partnership, 4th Floor Ruskin Chambers, 191 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6RP. E:[office@communitylawpartnership.co.uk](mailto:office@communitylawpartnership.co.uk)

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

### THE SCOTTISH CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

**Were you abused as a child in care?**

**Do you have information about children being abused in care?**

**Did this abuse happen at any time up to 17 December 2014?**

**TALK TO US**

#### GET IN TOUCH

**Call: 0800 092 9300**

**Email: [talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot](mailto:talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot)**

**Visit: [www.childabuseinquiry.scot](http://www.childabuseinquiry.scot)**

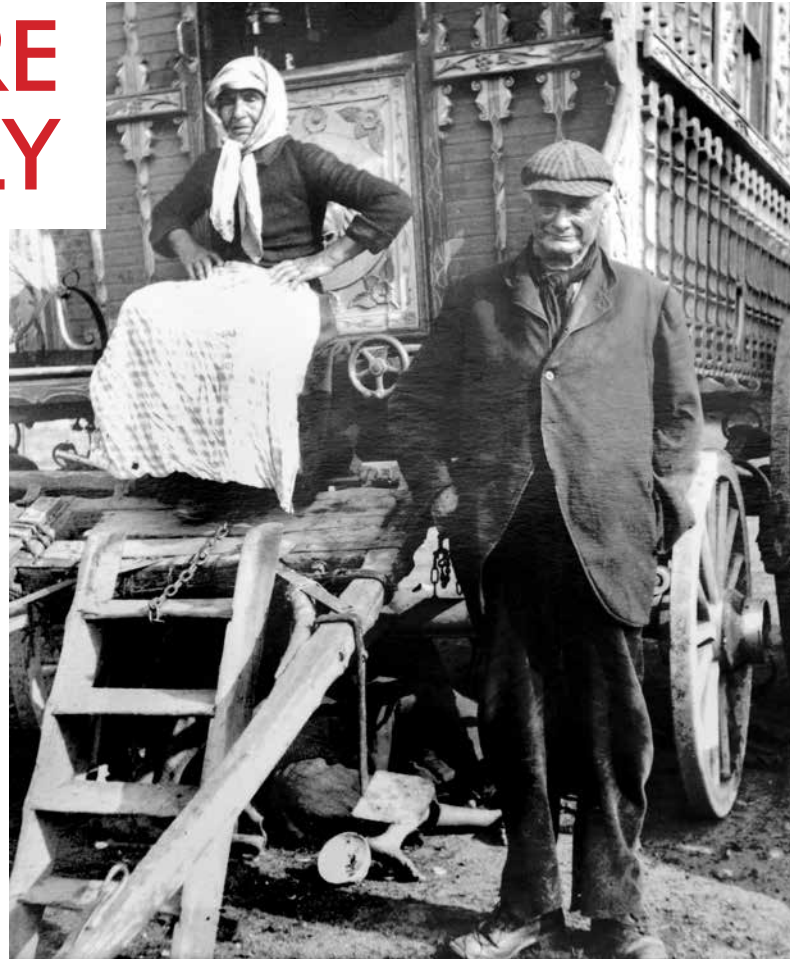
**Post: SCAI, PO Box 24085, Edinburgh, EH7 9EA**



# WE ARE FAMILY



JOE AND JOSEPHINE SMITH © JEAN GOLDSMITH



CHRISSY SMITH AND HIS WIFE PATIENCE SMITH (NEE LOVELL) IN CUMBRIA; JOE SMITH'S GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDAD AND GRANDMOTHER/COURTESY SMITH FAMILY



JOE SMITH IN 1997 IN A HUNGARIAN ROMA VILLAGE DURING A RUN TO ROMANIA WITH AID/COURTESY OF THE SMITH FAMILY

The Travellers' Times first met the Smiths last year when Charmaine contacted us after she became the target of discrimination from her local authority and children's school. That story never got told and her son Nathan is now doing well in a new school. However, as we got to know Charmaine and her mum, Josephine, we realised what an incredibly strong and resilient family they were with some amazing stories to tell. TT Editor Mike Doherty went to find out more.

"My girls are angels," says Josephine Smith. "They are hardworking, I reared them up to be good women and strong women. I am a strong woman, because that's the way that I'm built. That's the way I was encouraged to be. But I can only give the advice to my girls and they can either take it – or leave it. And they are strong-willed women that are not afraid of anything – they will get out there and do it. My brother's wife, she had cancer, she died when she was 25 and we helped to rear her children. We had responsibilities, me and my sisters, who are both dead now. I must have been sixteen. But you were a woman, it had to be done. You get up and you do what you got to do for people. I don't stop and think about it. I just do what my heart tells me to do."

Josephine Smith nee Rogerson was born 71 years ago on Sound Common, Cheshire, in a bow-top wagon. Her own mother, who would regularly go hawking with baskets, pegs, lace and telling fortunes, died when she was 12. Josephine and her husband Joe can trace their family back to the 1700s. Josephine and Joe now live in a house, five miles from where she was born, with daughter Charlotte. Another daughter, Charmaine, lives next door with her husband and two children, Nathan, and Donna (named after Donna Smith,

Josephine's eldest daughter who died in her twenties). Josephine and Joe have two other daughters: Roma who lives at the top of the lane with her son Thomas, and Josephine lives in Gloucester with her boys Joseph, Alexander and Peter.

When we arrive and park outside the house in front of the wrought iron gates, flanked by two white rearing horses on the gate posts, Josephine is already outside to greet us. The house is surrounded by an enormous established garden with a large concrete yard out the back with a gazebo and metal fire pit. In the yard, yellow and red balloons, from Nathan's birthday party the day before, drift about in the breeze. Inside the cottage, there is decorating work going on in the front room, of which Charlotte is in charge of. "I can turn my hand to anything," she says. "I'm very practical."

Josephine had moved off Sound Common and was living in trailers when she met Joe. "Actually, Josephine corrects herself, "No, he met me. Let's get this right. He fell for me. He found me," she laughs. "I say to my girls about life on the common, the cold never bothered you, you had a fire, doing your cooking, in the wagons you had the little stove and also one in the American frame tent, but you weren't



JOSEPHINE SMITH, DAUGHTER CHARMINE ABDUL KARIM AND HER DAUGHTER DONNA © JEAN GOLDSMITH



JOE SMITH © JEAN GOLDSMITH

always inside – you were out. The washing was done outside, obviously the little babbies were washed in the tent, until they were toddling up and down, and then you couldn't keep them in."

In 1976, after the birth of her third daughter, Josephine Smith and her husband Joe's lives abruptly changed after Josephine Jr – "still a babbly" – took ill with bronchitis. "She nearly died," says Josephine. "We were on Sound Common and she took very bad and I had to take her to the hospital. There was another Gypsy man and woman there and he had to take us in the lorry. When we got there they was waiting for us and my babbly was put in an oxygen tent. After she was let out of the hospital, an old Irish doctor came out onto Sound Common and he said; 'Would you take a house if I could get you the key tomorrow?' I said; 'Oh no – I don't know about that.' He said: 'Well, can I say something to you? If you don't leave your caravan and go into bricks and mortar this child will get very bad bronchitis.' My husband said: 'You know it's not that bad in a house. At a certain age we came off the camp and settled into houses and it's not that bad.' 'On your head be it,' I said.

"So I went to see the house with the doctor and stood outside and looked at the back

door and I thought 'oh dear' because it had these scratches on it. I wouldn't say it was dog scratches, it looked more like a were-wolf that had scratched and scratched trying to get in. And when I finally went inside I looked at the walls and the wallpaper was hanging down and I thought; 'ooh no – dear God!' And I started crying. I thought: 'Oh my dear God. I am trapped. If I'm in here; I'm not free. I'm used to freedom.' Anyway, the doctor told me that if I didn't take the house Josephine would end up back in hospital. And I did it for her. So we took the keys and we moved in and on the first night I said 'Drag the mattresses back down! I am not sleeping up there!' And every night was the same ritual. Down came the mattresses and in the morning they went back up again. I was petrified about going upstairs. It took me three years before I could sleep upstairs. I still throw open the upstairs windows at night."

Josephine, Charmaine and Donna then leave the front room to have their pictures taken. Nathan and cousin Thomas are playing together on a games console. I have already been shown Nathan's presentation project for his new school on his iPad on the Roma and Sinti victims of the Holocaust, and I am leafing through family picture albums. I spot a photograph

of a younger Joe in what appears to be some kind of orphanage. I ask him about this and he tells me that when the Berlin Wall came down and the former Soviet republics and satellite states opened up to the West, he started a charity called Christian Assistance for the Needy to alleviate some of the terrible conditions in the orphanages in Romania. Most of the children in the orphanages were Roma. Joe's first trip of many to Romania, with a convoy of trucks with donated sheets, food and other aid, took place in 1990. "The things I saw stay with you," says Joe. "It's better now, but back then, in some places the children were tied to the beds. They didn't cry. There was no one to come to them if they cried, so there was no point in crying. We had to distribute the aid ourselves because there was a lot of corruption. One manager of an orphanage told me to put a giant Easter egg I had brought in her office. So I crushed it into bits and gave each of the kids a piece." I ask Joe why he got involved. He pauses and quietly says: "Because God told me to."

Josephine and Charmaine come back into the house. "My girls are angels," says Josephine. "She's the best wife, mother, granny, auntie, great aunt, sister, and friend anyone could ask for." says Charmaine.



# "TINKERS AND GIPSIES" – THE HISTORIC TRAGEDY OF THE ATTEMPTED ERADICATION OF SCOTLAND'S TRAVELLERS



“There are some really tragic stories. The one I am speaking about is from 1907. The wife drowned in an accident and she left her husband with ten children. They were under constant supervision from the state with people visiting, and all these threats and things. The man eventually committed suicide and then all the children were taken and sent to the industrial schools and then on to Canada and Australia. This policy was still in operation in the 1950s. There are a lot of people who grew up in these industrial schools and never knew they were Travellers – they were completely denied their culture and their family.”

The Travellers’ Times is talking to Scottish Traveller campaigner David Donaldson about the historic taking of Scottish Traveller children, often followed by the forced migration of them abroad, by religious institutions acting with the collusion of the government, between the early 1900s and the 1960s. Donaldson says the key to unlocking the tragedy that his people had to endure – the ripping away of children from their parents and families – is an 1895 report into ‘habitual offenders, vagrants and inebriants in Scotland’. Donaldson believes that this report shaped how the authorities treated Scottish Travellers from the day it was published to decades later into the early 1960s – and that there are even echoes of this official culture and policy which was intended to eradicate Scottish Traveller culture by removing children and ‘re-educating’ them and wiping clean their identity. He says that much of this history is hidden from non-Travellers, yet is crucial for understanding Scottish Traveller culture today.

The 700-page report, based on a government inquiry that Donaldson says is the key to understanding how the authorities treated Scottish Travellers, was intended to ‘call attention to habitual offenders, vagrants and inebriants in Scotland’. The report was presented to Parliament in Westminster in 1895 by its author, the Secretary of State for Scotland Sir George Trevelyan. One ‘class’ of people that the report scrutinised, distinct from ‘habitual offenders, vagrants and inebriants’, but still seen as a related problem class by the report’s authors, were ‘tinkers and gypsies’. The 1895 report committee, made up of government and public officials, mostly met and heard evidence in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and London and their remit was not just to enquire into the ‘problem’ – it was to come up with solutions for the ‘problem’ as well.

“It was the church working with the government,” says Donaldson. “It all came out of the 1895 report. It was happening before then but it wasn’t policy. In the 1895 report the decision that came out of it was to start taking children off Tinkers that continued to live the itinerant lifestyle and it was backed up by the church and the government. The church founded a lot of the institutions abroad, and it propagated a lot of the rural detention centres, like the Quarriers, where the children were kept before they were sent away. A lot of kids where taken for little or no reason. I have examples from my own family. It’s such a huge issue and after talking to so many country people about Traveller history, I’ve come to realise that as a community we are very ignorant about country-folk understanding. I was always brought up believing that the settled community knew just as much as us about the forced adoptions and the forced migration and they don’t. It’s completely unknown.”

“That Traveller lifestyle was detrimental to a child’s development was social work policy for a long time,” says Donaldson. “So the common practice was to just take them away and put them in hostels and homes and then ship them out abroad. A lot of people weren’t sent away but they were taken to orphanages and industrial schools and it was for the reason that social workers deemed that there was an inherent risk factor with the lifestyle.”

Donaldson says both himself, and fellow Scottish Traveller campaigner, author and historian Jess Smith, have access to ‘hundreds’ of personal eyewitness accounts of Traveller children being taken and put into institutions by quasi-religious organisations and state social work officials, but he is worried that this vital living memory element of his people’s history will fade as time marches on. He believes these accounts need to be recorded before the bearers of Scotland’s tragic history of the persecution and attempted eradication of its nomadic indigenous ethnic minority pass away. “My ancestors were McPhees from up north and around 1905, they were both convicted and sent to prison in Dingwall, because their baby had died and they were charged with child neglect and abuse,” says Donaldson. “What was wrong was that they were camped in a cave and that classified them as child abusers and they were actually sent to jail for it. Just after losing their baby and because they were then sent to jail, a load of their other children were taken by the Quarriers and they were sent to Canada.”

**By Mike Doherty**



**MAIN PICTURE:** TRAVELLERS BY LOCH ERIBOLL  
© NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/EDWARD CHAMBRÉ HARDMAN COLLECTION. WITH THANKS TO THE NATIONAL TRUST VISITOR INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.NATIONALTRUST.ORG.UK](http://WWW.NATIONALTRUST.ORG.UK)

**LEFT:** TINKERS HEART - SCOTLAND’S ONLY ‘SITE OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE’ THAT IS PART OF SCOTTISH TRAVELLER HISTORY AND CULTURE. THE CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE IT WAS LED BY JESS SMITH © CHARLES NEWLAND

**RIGHT:** SCOTTISH TRAVELLER CAMPAIGNER DAVID DONALDSON  
© DAN HAWORTH-SALTER



# YOUTH TRAVELLERS' TIMES



UK DELEGATES AT AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU CONCENTRATION CAMP ON AUGUST 2ND.. © SENJUR MEMISI

**'DIKH HE NA BISTER' (LOOK AND DON'T FORGET) ROMA GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE INITIATIVE**

In August a group of Gypsies and Travellers attended the international youth event 'Dikh He Na Bister' where they took part in workshops about human rights education, youth activism and explored how current issues relating to anti-gypsyism and extremism relate to the historic experience of the Roma Genocide. They also had the opportunity to meet with holocaust survivors and visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. If you are aged 18-30 and interested in going next year email [info@gateherts.org](mailto:info@gateherts.org)



BEN BENNETT COLLECTING THE DIANA AWARD

**YOUNG ROMANY GYPSY CAMPAIGNER AND CH5'S GYPSY KIDS STAR BEN BENNETT HAS WON A PRESTIGIOUS DIANA AWARD**

Ben Bennett, a 14-year-old from Nottingham, has been awarded the honour for his work campaigning and challenging racism and discrimination against Gypsy and Traveller young people. The Diana Award is the most respected honour a young person aged 9-25 years can receive for their social action or humanitarian work.

Speaking to the Travellers' Times he said, "I am incredibly overwhelmed and surprised to have received the award, and am proud to be working hard to help pave the way to fight against prejudice and discrimination."



ROMANI AND TRAVELLER WOMEN'S CONFERENCE © JONATHAN LEE

**IN SEPTEMBER ACERT'S ANNUAL MINI CONFERENCE PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER WOMEN'S ACTIVISM**

The day was a celebration of the strengths and resilience of Romany and Traveller women across the UK. Powerful messages and testimonies were shared by women breaking down barriers and creating and increasing opportunities for other women and girls. This year ACERT was pleased to welcome young Roma, Travellers and Showmen onto the executive committee to help lead them into the future. For more information visit <https://acert.org.uk/>



MEMBERS OF THE TOME ANOSHA TEAM TAKING A TOTAL OF 32 TRAVELLER KIDS TO BELFAST ZOO AS PART OF THEIR SUMMER SCHEME. © AMY WARD

**TOME ANOSHA SAY, "NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!"**

Tome Anosha is a Traveller led organisation operating in Belfast who are committed to the realisation, promotion and protection of human rights, social justice and education of community members. Amy Ward, one of the founders told Travellers' Times, "We intend to work with Travellers to achieve participative democracy, sustainable development and economic and educational opportunity". For more information visit

**tomeanosha.com  
#TravellerLed  
#DoingItForOurselves  
#MincierPower**

# #YTT BIG WRITE

## TRAVELLERS' TIMES CREATIVE WRITING & POETRY COMPETITION



The Big Write 2018 was a BIG success. We had a range of poems and stories from young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers all over the UK. We invited young people to put their pen to paper and write an original tale or poem on the theme of 'Home' in 500 words or fewer. Award winning author Jess Smith selected the overall winner, 16-year-old, Ruby-Leigh Smith from Hertfordshire. This is her story.

The moors are the closest thing I have to home.

We had travelled to the moors, and were camping in our vardos, on a patch of grass that wouldn't collect the treacherous rainfall that Granny Clem had said was coming - she was always right about the weather.

My father had offered to take me for a walk across the moors after dinner, and I'd happily accepted - I loved to spend time with Daddy. So we'd walked together, him holding my hand as I skipped along merrily with not a care in the world... but that wouldn't last long.

He'd taken me down to the stream, and we'd watched the tiny silver fish darting through the water together, pretending that the fish could speak to each-other, and wondering what they were saying. And then it had grown cold, and I'd shivered. I remembered that. Daddy had looked at me, smiling. "You cold, Babby?" I'd nodded, and he had picked me up, swinging me onto his shoulders, telling me to hold on. And that was where I was happiest - to those who didn't know him, my Daddy might have looked scary.

He'd several tattoos covering his upper body, and one of his eyes was made of glass, to me he was nothing more than a

kind, simple man... and one that I adored with every fibre of my being. He'd walked back, being careful of where he stepped in case he tripped, or a tree branch brushed me, him telling me a story about the little black horse he had waiting for me back north that he'd bought the previous year. "Thought you weren't allowed to camp here anymore, Gypsy?" I turned around, and was met with a snarling grimace from a man.

Daddy turned, and glared at the man. "Leave us alone," he said, "I'm with my daughter. I don't want to fight." He had done this before - avoided conflict because I'd been with him. "We don't care." The man snarled as two other men stepped out from behind some trees, "We know what you did, Gypo. You stole two horses. " Daddy put me down, smiling at me, "Babby, go back to Mummy, send Uncle Lee and Henry back here." "Daddy... will you be okay?" I asked, warily eyeing the three men.

He nodded, offering me an encouraging smile, "I'll be fine. Run." I nodded, pecked his cheek, and sprinted back to the camp, screaming all-the-while for Uncle Lee and Henry. When my uncles returned almost two hours later, they looked lost, and forlorn - and Daddy wasn't with them. I ran over, "Daddy? Daddy?!" But he didn't appear. Daddy didn't come back again. And as I sit by the stream, a stream so familiar to me, with my son in my lap, I like to think that my Daddy is beside me, and is laughing as I play the same games with my boy as he used to play with me. The moors are the closest thing I have to home - because that is where my Daddy is.

**Ruby-Leigh Smith, 16yrs**



# #YTT PROFILE



AS A YOUNG ROMA LGBT+ WOMAN, I HAVE NOT ALWAYS FOUND THE PROCESS OF SELF-ACCEPTANCE AND PRIDE VERY EASY...  
WRITES LOIS BROOKES-JONES

From a young age you're taught that 'exposing' yourself as Romani to the general gadje population is dangerous, and puts you in a vulnerable position to be open to the discrimination and racism which underpins UK society. I agree with this narrative, however, I feel like it is victim-blaming and making ourselves palatable to the wider population which appeals to the comfort of gadjes, at the expense of mental health and well-being of the Traveller, Roma, and many variations of our communities which span across the globe. We shouldn't have to hide our cultural identity to receive basic respect whilst gadje girls put on their hoop earrings and gaudy velvet skirts to appear exotic and interesting as a parody of us when Halloween comes around.

I proudly wear my traditional Roma dress to university because I've taught myself that I have a right to occupy space. I began working in the women's rights movement when I was eighteen and furious at the current state of affairs which targeted me both as a woman, and for being Romani. I had been

## LOIS BROOKES-JONES

"WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO HIDE OUR CULTURAL IDENTITY TO RECEIVE BASIC RESPECT WHILST GADJE GIRLS PUT ON THEIR HOOP EARRINGS AND GAUDY VELVET SKIRTS TO APPEAR EXOTIC AND INTERESTING AS A PARODY OF US WHEN HALLOWEEN COMES AROUND"

turned away from jobs after filling in diversity forms, banned from performing my advocacy poetry at local bars, and had been in educational spaces where anti-gypsyism was expressed without hesitation and went unchallenged by my educators. I joined the YWCA GB and can easily say that it changed my life forever. I was invited to travel to Rotherham and undertake research on vulnerable women, attended a study session in Belfast working with YWCA Northern Ireland and YWCA Palestine on conflict resolution. I was able to walk into Stormont and speak to politicians directly regarding political prisoners and the impact of conflict on women.

One of my passions in life has been my education. I was accepted for the Queens University Human Rights and Peace Building Summer School and SOAS Law Summer School, at which I received a prize for being the 'Most Engaged

Student'. I want to stress that anyone from the Roma and Traveller community can succeed and accomplish what they wish to. I don't have top grades, but have persevered in my pursuit for growth and personal achievement.

I was recently granted the opportunity to be a preparatory team member for the 2018 Study Session 'Women on the Move' which explored the issues faced by young migrant and refugee women across the globe, all whilst being in the beautiful city of Budapest where I met so many good friends of mine. It was after this excursion that I applied to be an EYWCA Representative for the European Youth Forum, and was delighted to have been accepted for this position.

Roma and Traveller youth owe it to ourselves and our communities to be the change we wish to see in the world, pursue our dreams and ambitions, and understand our value.

# #YTT AT APPLEBY FAIR



LILLY-MARIE WILLIAMS AND MR JACK © LISA SMITH



THE BUTLER FAMILY © LISA SMITH

YTT WAS AT THIS YEAR'S APPLEBY FAIR. HERE IS A SELECTION OF PHOTOS FROM THE BIGGEST AND BEST KNOWN HORSE FAIR OF THEM ALL



TROTting FULL PELT DOWN THE FLASHING LANE © LISA SMITH



LEFT TO RIGHT: BETSY MOBEY, TT'S DAMIAN LE BAS, DAVID DONALDSON, JONATHAN LEE, TT'S LISA SMITH AND JOHNSON WELCH © ADAM KEELAN



THE WILLIAMS AND EVANS FAMILIES © LISA SMITH





# NEGOTIATED STOPPING

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***IT'S PROVEN TO WORK.***

For more information, FAQs, testimonials and some easy-to-use downloadable tools please visit:

**[NEGOTIATEDSTOPPING.CO.UK](http://NEGOTIATEDSTOPPING.CO.UK)**

