

THE MAGAZINE FOR GYPSIES, ROMA & TRAVELLERS

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A young boy with a serious expression stands in front of a vibrant, colorful graffiti wall. He is wearing a black baseball cap with the number '60' on it and a black hoodie with a 'BARBERS CLUB' logo. He holds a white board with a colorful graffiti design featuring the word 'WAVE' and a skull. The magazine title 'TRAVELLERS TIMES' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

TRAVELLERS TIMES

THE GRAFFITI KIDS

YOUNG TRAVELLERS GET CREATIVE

INSIDE: NEWS, TRAVELLER PRIDE, TRAVELLER MOVEMENT,
PETE'S TRUST, LEE GAP FAIR, FILM, SOLAR POWER!



STAFF FROM FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND TRAVELLERS HOLD UP THE PLEDGE CARD © FFT

Despite the success of Travellers' Times over the last 20 years, it's important that we keep looking forward. The world is changing ever more quickly and it's vital that TT moves with the times, and that we continue to listen closely to the views of our readers be they online or in print. In August TT's Damian Le Bas and Lisa Smith, together with Rural Media's Development Manager, Rich Matthews travelled around England meeting with our readers and some Gypsy and Traveller organisations and their members. Views were expressed honestly and passionately, giving the TT team a vast array of ideas and suggestions for where TT should go over the next five years or so.

Unsurprisingly most young people wanted to see more short videos, including films produced by themselves, both drama and factual, and shared on Facebook and newer social media apps such as TikTok. There were lots of suggestions for improving the TT magazine like bringing back adverts, starting a comic strip, changing the design, and distributing it more widely at fairs, doctors' surgeries and schools. A big thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation events in August. We'll be holding more events around the UK over the coming months, as well as analysing the results from TT's Big Survey. In the Spring issue of TT we will publish detailed plans for how UK's Gypsy and Traveller communities can ensure the success of Travellers' Times for the next 20 years!

Nic Millington, Rural Media CEO

"WE'RE CALLING ON MPS TO STAND UP AGAINST THE APPALLING RACISM MANY MEMBERS OF GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCE ON A DAILY BASIS AND TO TAKE SERIOUS ACTION ON THE LONG-STANDING SHORTAGE OF PLACES FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES TO LIVE."

STOP PRESS: POLITICIANS PLEDGE SUPPORT FOR GRT COMMUNITIES

A 'pledge card' has been launched which allows MPs to declare their support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the United Kingdom.

Speaking about the pledge card, Sarah Mann, Director of Friends, Families and Travellers, said she hoped more MPs would take the pledge:

"We're calling on MPs to stand up against the appalling racism many members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities experience on a daily basis and to take serious action on the long-standing shortage of places for Gypsy and Traveller communities to live."

Pledge cards have already been signed by Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer John McDonnell, Kate Green MP, Deidre Brock MP, Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP, Alex Sobel MP and Catherine West MP.

Organisations backing the pledge cards include Friends, Families and Travellers, the National Federation of Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Groups, the Gypsy Council, London Gypsies and Travellers, the Traveller Movement, GATE Herts, Roma Support Group, Derbyshire Gypsy Liason Group and Leeds GATE.

To read more about pledge cards go to: www.gypsy-traveller.org/pledge-card-asking-your-mp-to-sign-up/

TT News

COVER PHOTO: © DAN HAWORTH-SALTER



LOTTERY FUNDED



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NEWS



LONDON GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS AND THEIR LEGAL TEAM OUTSIDE THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE IN LONDON ON THE DAY OF THEIR VICTORY © MIKE DOHERTY

ANTI-TRAVELLER INJUNCTIONS RULED UNLAWFUL IN HIGH COURT

An application by the London Borough of Bromley for an injunction prohibiting camping by "persons unknown" on their land has been refused by the High Court after a successful legal challenge by a Gypsy and Traveller charity.

Debby Kennett, Chief Executive of London Gypsies and Travellers (LGT), said she was absolutely delighted with the outcome. "The Judge recognised that Gypsies and Travellers have been present in this country for hundreds of years and that their traditional way of life is protected under human rights and equalities law."

The ruling could have major implications because 34 councils – including 14 in London – have taken out similar injunctions and these are now in doubt.

LGT were represented by Marc Willers QC and Tessa Buchanan, barristers at Garden Court Chambers, and by Chris Johnson, solicitor at The Community Law Partnership.

By Mike Doherty/TT News



THE STAR IN HODDESDON WAS ONE OF THE PUBS THAT CLOSED © MIKE DOHERTY

SHOPS AND PUBS CLOSE FOR TRAVELLER GIRL'S FUNERAL

Travellers have reacted with anger after shops and pubs closed across two counties on the day of a young girl's funeral.

Sixteen-year-old Mary Beary's funeral took place in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. Hundreds of family and friends came to pay their respects.

A Traveller man who was at the funeral called the decisions to close "racist", adding, "how is this right in this day and age?"

Two of the pubs that shut were owned by JD Wetherspoons.

"The decision was made by the company and was subsequently endorsed by the police," said a Wetherspoon spokesperson.

"We completely refute any allegations of racism."

Yvonne MacNamara CEO of the Traveller Movement said that it was "unfortunately not uncommon" for pubs and shops to discriminate against Travellers.

"Gypsies, Roma and Irish Travellers continue to suffer extreme levels of prejudice and discrimination in their everyday lives," she said.

By Mike Doherty/TT News



EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN BRUSSELS © DIMITRIS VETSIKAS

COMMISSION SLAMS UK GOVERNMENT

A national Gypsy-led organisation has urged the UK Government to take note of a recent European Commission report on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) inequalities in the UK.

The EC report assessed progress in key UK Government policy areas and found that the situation had "worsened".

Siobhan Spencer, Trustee and Coordinator of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, said that the report showed that the UK Government needed to do more.

"While we welcome the recent announcement of a national strategy to tackle Gypsy, Roma and Traveller inequalities in the UK this report shows the huge amount of work that needs to be done, but importantly it also provides practical recommendations regarding the actions that need to be taken if these inequalities are to be addressed," said Siobhan Spencer.

By Mike Doherty/TT News

NEWS



CATHOLIC TRAVELLERS IN ST PETER'S CHURCH
© SHAUN SOTO

CATHOLIC TRAVELLERS CELEBRATE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

Hundreds of Catholic Travellers came together to celebrate a special Mass for the Feast of the Assumption at St Peter's Church in Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

The Mass, which took place in August, also celebrated the first anniversary of the Mission of Father Eltin Daly, a Priest who devoted his life and work to the Traveller community.

Talking to the Travellers' Times, Herts based Irish Traveller Edward Doherty said that there was also a regular Mass at St Peter's Church at 2pm for the Travelling community every Sunday, and that everybody was invited to come.

The address of the church is: St Peters Church, Bishop's Rise, Hatfield, AL10 9HN.

By Mike Doherty/TT News

NAI BISTARDE – THE UNFORGOTTEN

On the 2nd of August in Parliament Square, Westminster, Roma from all around the UK gathered to protest against racial discrimination, commemorating the victims of Romano Samudaripen – the Roma Genocide during World War Two.

The London rally was supported by the European GRT society. Leaders and activists from Ireland, Sweden, France and Italy flew all the way to the UK capital for only one day, to stand together for Roma rights and to pay tribute to the victims of Holocaust.

On this day Roma, Gypsies and Travellers stood side by side in London to campaign against prejudices and discrimination.

Julia O'Reilly, Irish Traveller, said that she believed it was really important, right now, that Gypsies, Roma and Travellers act together for their children's sake.

Alongside Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, the rally was supported by the Jewish Socialist Group and Stand Up To Racism.

By Alunica Lepadatu/TT News



NIA BISTARDE
– THE UNFORGOTTEN
© ALUNICA LEPADATU

TONY FRANCIS SHEARER

PRISONERS PAY TRIBUTE TO TONY FRANCIS SHEARER

Prisoners at Ford Prison, West Sussex, have paid tribute to former inmate and friend Tony Francis Shearer, who died on 18th July earlier this year aged 32.

In a moving message that was published on The Travellers' Times Online, the prisoners said:

"Tony passed away on the 18th July and leaves behind his beautiful daughter, Dolly Eliza Shearer, his partner Mimi, his mother and father, five siblings, seven nephews and three nieces.

He left prison on the 15th of July 2019; ready to live a normal life with his daughter and family. He had changed his ways and was never coming back to prison, but sadly Tony was taken from us.

This is a message to everyone in the Travelling community: Spend all your precious time with your family and loved ones, as you never know what tomorrow brings."

TT News/Friends Families and Travellers



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS
© LEE WARD AT
LAW PHOTOGRAPHY



THE SUN SHINES DOWN ON LEE GAP FAIR

Wakefield-based freelance photographer Lee Ward took his camera along to Lee Gap Fair in August and took some excellent photographs of what looked like a lovely event on a beautiful sunny day. If you know anyone in the photographs – or it's one of you – please let us and Lee know!

GOVERNMENT STRATEGY TO ELIMINATE GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER INEQUALITIES?



THE VIEW FROM THE FLOOR OF THE 2018 TRAVELLER MOVEMENT CONFERENCE © MARY HUMPHREY

Waiting, waiting waiting... Is the wait finally over? Government announce new national strategy to eliminate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller inequalities.

So much has been written about the inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Health inequalities are rife, with Gypsies and Travellers living 10–12 years less than the general population. Both housed and nomadic Travellers suffer various forms of discrimination, either via a discriminatory – and probably illegal – planning definition, while those living on sites suffer from overcrowding and site neglect. The majority, now forced to live in bricks and mortar accommodation, often feel isolated and alone having been cut off from their families.

Relationships with the police are often strained and characterised by mistrust, with police policy more inclined towards enforcement rather than community cohesion. And last, but not least, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are the most disadvantaged and poorly served children in the UK education system; they suffer the highest number of exclusions and have the poorest attainment of all ethnic groups. It really is quite dire.

To date, there have been a multitude of inquiries, consultations and reviews into these inequalities, but most have amounted to nothing. So it came as little surprise when on June 6th the Government announced a NEW national strategy to tackle Gypsy, Roma and Traveller inequalities. This comes off the back of the eighteen month inquiry by the Women and Equalities committee which examined the extent of the inequalities in each of the communities. Unsurprisingly, the select committee found there had been a persistent failure by both national and local policy-makers to tackle these inequalities in any sustained way, and it called on the Government to put a strategy in place.

We have heard these promises before and, more often than not, they don't amount to a whole lot.

By the Traveller Movement

SO WHAT IS THIS NEW NATIONAL STRATEGY?

We know that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (or MHCLG) are leading on this, and will work across Government departments to improve outcomes in key areas, including health, education, employment and data monitoring. Data monitoring is especially important, as there are major gaps for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers across public institutions.



JOSEPHINE SMITH HOLDS UP A PETE'S FOUNDATION 'DIVERT AND DISTRACT' SENSORY TOY BAG. © MIKE DOHERTY/TT

PETE'S FOUNDATION

"If we can be there and help one family then I've done my job and Pete's Foundation is here to help many more families than that," says Josephine Smith, a Romany Gypsy mother of three living in Gloucestershire.

Pete's Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that Josephine is set to launch which is named after her son, Peter, 5, who is autistic. Pete's Foundation will be there to help Gypsy and Traveller families with autistic children through the often fraught process of getting a diagnosis and NHS and local authority support.

Josephine describes how she and her husband became aware that Pete was autistic. "Pete was born five weeks early and the two of us nearly died during his birth and he was left without oxygen for some time," says Josephine. "When he reached 12 months old, he learnt things like 'dadda' and 'mamma' and 'milk' but then overnight that stopped and he was just pointing at things. Then other things started happening like if he dropped something from his pram like other kids did, Pete wouldn't bring your attention to it, he would leave it and just stare off into space. Another thing that really alerted me was when I put him outside in the garden, the birdsong would send him into meltdown. He would be flapping his hands, slapping his ears, spinning around and around in circles, and run the length of the room and he would do it for hours. People would say 'it's a tantrum', but you knew the babby wasn't having a tantrum, he was having what we now know was a sensory meltdown."

Even though Pete was diagnosed with autism privately by a top children's specialist doctor, Josephine had to fight for two years to get the NHS and the local authority to accept this. "I wasn't being listened to. Traumatic is not the word for it. I can't put into words what our little family had to go through. It was beyond a fight to get even a smidgen of support. Mentally and emotionally I can understand why mothers and fathers break up over it, because there is no support within the UK that is active and quick enough to get in there straight away." Josephine adds that although many families struggle with getting treatment for their autistic children, it would be an even bigger fight for Gypsy and Traveller families who face extra barriers and often experience racism when trying to access healthcare.

Another way that Pete's Foundation aims to help families with autistic children is to provide 'tool kits'. "When we finally came to meet occupational therapists and language therapists, they gave us a tool kit," says Josephine, who has now trained as a psychotherapist herself and recently sat her final exams. "They are bags of sensory toys that use smell, sound and feel; things that would help to bring him down and things that would help to calm him," adds Josephine. "So what Pete's Foundation will do is provide little bags like this to families, and tell them how each sensory toy or product works and what that can do for the child. We call them divert and distract bags. We go in and we lay them out and we sit and go through them with the family and show them how they can be used as therapy for the child. And if we would have had somebody that would have come in at a much earlier date for us with Peter and told us about these kinds of divert and distract bags it would have made such a difference to our lives. So my message to any families out there who have, or think you may have, an autistic child is that Pete's Foundation will be here for you."

By Mike Doherty

THE GRAFFITI KIDS: YOUNG TRAVELLERS GET CREATIVE

Earlier this year Travellers' Times worked with some young Gypsies and Travellers who were keen to use some exciting new way to challenge negative perceptions of them and other young people just like them.

Over several weeks TT's Damian le Bas worked with the group to create a fabulous new poem and create some beautiful Graffiti Art, taking inspiration from the Graffiti Art Trail in Birmingham.

Filmmakers Dan Haworth-Salter and Charles Newland from Rural Media also made a fabulous short film with the young people featuring both the poem and the graffiti art which will launch in December 2019 and you can watch on You Tube and the TT website.

The young people are all looking to gain a Bronze Art award in recognition of all their hard work.

TT's Project Manager Julie Colman said "this was a really ambitious and exciting project and we challenged the participants to work really hard and think about art in ways they hadn't thought about before but these bright young people rose to that challenge and produced some amazing work."

As well as funding from the National Lottery Community Fund this project also had support from Arts Connect and Rooftop Housing.

By Julie Colman/TT

© DAN HAWORTH-SALTER





ALL PHOTOGRAPHS © JOSEPH MITCHELL WWW.JOSEPHMITCHELL.ORG



TRAVELLER LGBT PRIDE

A group of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Gypsies, Roma and Travellers made history last Saturday when they took part in the world-famous London Pride Parade for the first-ever time.

Traveller Pride – made up of LGBT activists from all over the UK and Europe – joined the parade and marched from Oxford Street to Trafalgar Square flying both the rainbow and the GRT flag high.

The parade was cheered on by over one and a half million onlookers, LGBT activists and revellers.

Speaking to The Travellers' Times, organiser Tyler said that Traveller Pride were all really pleased with how Pride in London went.

The 20 LGBT activists taking part in Traveller Pride included Showmen, Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Roma and Bargee/Boaters.

By Mike Doherty/TT News

FILM



ABOVE: THE WEDDING SCENE FROM GHOST GYPSY
© RICHARD JEFFEREY
RIGHT: A STILL FROM ROADS FROM THE PAST
© BECK WILLIAMS

GHOST GYPSY

A community film about a young Traveller girl 'Violet' searching to find her way in the world. Written & directed by Sharon Muiruri Coyne.

A community project supported by the Arts Development Company, Dorset Race Equality Council, Development Education in Dorset, (DEED) and Kushti Bok, and Life Changing Choices. Filmed by Hands on Media. Folk Historian: Ray Wills.

All Gypsy and Traveller roles are played by volunteer Gypsies and Travellers. Non-Traveller roles were played by volunteers from Vita Nova and The Pilsdon Community.

Watch Ghost Gypsy and read about the making of the film at:

www.travellerstimes.org.uk/features/ghost-gypsy



ROADS FROM THE PAST

There are questions we at the TT hear so many times, and we are sure you do too; writes Damian le Bas, TT Editor at Large.

"It's so complicated. What are we supposed to call you all? Where do you come from? What have you got to do with each other? I'm confused!"

And we often wished there was something short and sweet that we could show people to point them in the right direction.

'Roads from the Past' is a new animation made in response to these questions about the history of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in Britain, from ancient times up to the present day.

"The fact is, our history is long and complicated. You can't explain it all in five minutes, any more than you could explain the history of England, or farming, or music."

So the film isn't a full explanation. It's just a start and you can watch it on the TT website at

www.travellerstimes.org.uk/heritage/roads-past-short-history-Britains-Gypsies-Roma-and-Travellers

#YTT



MAGGIE AND JADE'S ROUNDERS TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER © LISA SMITH

SISTERS HONOUR FRIEND'S MEMORY BY RAISING MONEY FOR EPILEPSY SOCIETY

(Maggie and Jade's rounders tournament was a big success.)

Twin sisters Maggie and Jade Smith (20) from Worcestershire have been running a series of fundraising events in loving memory of their friend Caitlin Sharp who tragically died in July following an epileptic seizure.

They raised an impressive £1119.75 for the Epilepsy Society by carrying out fundraising activities at Worcester Grimley Raceway, Hereford Autograss Club and a rounders tournament at their local cricket club where they had over 400 people attend.

Maggie Smith told YTT: "We hope Catlin would be happy with what we have achieved. All the amazing people that took part in our fundraisers are contributing to make sure vital research can happen to improve the lives of many adults and children up and down the country. We want to make sure others have a better understanding on what to do when someone has a seizure so that the victims of this tragic neurological disorder have a better chance at survival after a seizure and the heartbreak some of my family members have felt can be avoided!"



PHOTO: RILEY EDESON © VIOLET CANNON

RILEY EDESON WINS SCHOOLBOY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Eleven-year-old, English Traveller, Riley Edeson won the title of Champion at the Yorkshire National schoolboy championships this year. Riley has trained hard for three years, at Legions Gym. His interest in boxing stemmed from hearing stories about his Grandad Fred Smith who was a boxer himself. Riley's takes his inspiration from Tyson Fury and a member of his own family in York, Henry Wharton, but his real hero is Antony Joshua. Riley explained that "in the gym it doesn't matter what you are, it isn't about being a Gypsy or Traveller, it's just about Boxing."

LEEDS GATE BOYS COME TO BABY BANK'S RESCUE

In August three young boys from Leeds heard that an urgent appeal had gone out by their local baby bank to say they had run out of essential items to support parents in need. After hearing the news the boys decided that instead of going ahead with an activity they had planned as part of their weekly boys' group they would to apply to Leeds GATE seedcorn grant, a small pot of money where community members can apply for up to £100 to do something that has a benefit to their wider community. The boys were successful in putting their case forward. Before spending the money the boys, Maverick, Billy and Jerry, along with Leeds GATE youth worker Kathleen Anne visited the baby bank to ask what



PHOTO (LEFT TO RIGHT: MAVERICK, BILLY, JERRY AND LEEDS GATE YOUTH WORKER KATHLEEN ANNE) © LEEDSGATE

they needed. The boys then went out shopping for items. Leeds Baby Bank took to Facebook to show their gratitude for the support shown by the boys,

"A really big thank you to these young men and Kathleen from Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange."

#YTT

PARIS SMITH IS TAKING THE BOXING WORLD BY STORM
© ASHLEY MARTIN



PARIS SMITH MAKES HISTORY WITH A EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP GOLD MEDAL WIN

Boxer Paris Smith has won a gold medal at the schoolgirls European Championships in August. The 13-year-old, who fights out of Legions Gym in Clifton Moor, made history at the event by becoming the first fighter from the city of York to represent England at a major international tournament. Her coach Ashley Martin told YTT: "Paris' achievements in boxing are nothing short of phenomenal. When she walked into the gym just over 2 years ago, it was clear that she possessed something special. She's turned heads from day one, and winning the National, then European Championship is a massive testament to her commitment to the sport. We're really looking forward to what the future may hold for Paris. She's got the potential to go all the way in this sport, and as long as she continues to believe in her ability, and focuses on her training, nothing can stop her!"

UP AND COMING BOXER BEN SMITH IS ON TOP FORM

Congratulations to 12-year-old Ben Smith, who fights out of Burton Park amateur boxing club in Kettering. The upcoming boxer fought in the East Midlands schoolboy championships this year. The dedicated boxer trains six days a week and has high hopes for the future. He takes his inspiration from Canelo Álvarez, a Mexican boxer who is a three-weight world champion. Speaking to YTT Ben said, "I like his technique and counter punches."

© LISA SMITH





IT'S KUSHTI TO ROKKER



IT'S KUSHTI TO ROKKER IS BRITISH ROMANI FOR IT'S GOOD TO TALK

On November 1st 2019 'Its Kushti to Rokker', an education and **community film making project, launched** a series of short films to raise awareness about mental health and well-being amongst young Travellers.

"We need to do all we can to support our future generations to speak out," said IKTR Project Manager and YTT Youth Editor Lisa Smith. The aim of the project is to encourage us all to be more open about our mental health, and to start conversations with those who might need our support."

A group of young Travellers have been working with writers and filmmakers to create five short films based on their real-life experiences to support other young people to seek help.

You can watch all the films here: www.travellerstimes.org.uk/its-kushti-rokker and while you are there take a look at our info pack for young people with lots of handy information about support that's out there for you.

You'll also see a 10-minute documentary presented by Romani activist Betsy Mobey aimed at education and healthcare professionals to improve knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller health outcomes and the barriers young people can encounter to fulfilling their potential and getting the right support.

Follow us on Instagram @its_kushti_to_rokker for the latest news and updates!



ABOVE: RICHARD BENNETT WITH ONE OF THE MANY BANKS OF RECYCLED SOLAR PANELS © MIKE DOHERTY/TT
LEFT: COMMUNITY, RICHARD BENNETT AND THE SITE'S 16-SEAT CINEMA © MIKE DOHERTY/TT

LIVING A PEACEFUL AND HAPPY LIFE DOES NOT COST THE EARTH

Somewhere in the north of England on a three-and-a-half acre private Traveller site, a Romany Gypsy family and friends are doing their bit to combat climate change by going completely off-grid – they are connected to no utilities like gas, water or the national electricity grid – and yet their unique move towards complete self-sufficiency started out as necessity.

Richard and Nathalie Bennett's site is off a country lane a few miles from a market town, is surrounded by mature leafy trees and English native hedging, borders on one side on a gushing stream and looks beautiful and verdant on a summer afternoon. There are caravans and chalets dotted round and big banks of solar panels angled towards the rising sun, some of them higher than a transit van and three times as long.

Richard Bennett, "A proud Romany Gypsy man" explains: "It started off as a necessity. We are miles from any sewers and water utilities. We had a quote for ¾ of a million pounds to get connected to the mains electricity. The electric company said they would have to build a new substation just to connect us to the national grid. We are now completely self-sufficient and off-grid.

"It started off as a temporary thing until we managed to get connected with electricity," says Richard's wife Nathalie Bennett. "But then we stuck with it. We haven't had a utility bill, water, gas or electric, for five years."

"And we have built it up using second-hand and sometimes free materials and equipment. But that's the Traveller way of life and has been for centuries," adds Richard.

"We are the ultimate Wombles," laughs Nathalie.

The site now has its own bore-hole used to pump fresh water from deep underground, compost loos, solar panels for electric, mobile wifi, a sixteen-seat cinema with a recycled screen and a bar with a pool table for family and friends to come together and relax in, a classroom where skills are shared and learnt, a laundry, and even a sunbed suite – powered by the sun itself! Richard will soon be making his own bio-diesel, using a state of the art filter system that recycles cooking oil given away free by cafés, chip shops and restaurants. "They can't get rid of it without paying for it to be dumped," says Richard. "These solar panels would have become landfill. Instead they are providing electricity for our site for free. And we brought them second hand for a song. The cinema screen is an old wipe board taken from a school skip for free with permission, and the social club structure was built with fencing panel seconds given to us by a friend in the fencing trade."

During that five year journey of discovery and necessity, Richard, who has "qualifications coming out of his ears and tons of experience in electrical engineering, plumbing, gas fitting and connections within the trades," got bitten by the eco-bug.

"We were born and thrived 99% of our time without electricity, gas and other utilities, what's the difference now?" Richard says. "What do we want to do? Burn the planet's resources out? Living a peaceful and happy life does not cost the earth."

By Mike Doherty/TT

BROADWAY



KITCHENS

MANUFACTURER OF LUXURY BESPOKE KITCHENS



www.broadwaybespokekitchens.co.uk

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