

THE MAGAZINE FOR GYPSIES, ROMA & TRAVELLERS

AUTUMN/WINTER 2023 | ISSUE 73 | FREE | WWW.TRAVELLERSTIMES.ORG.UK

**TRAVELLERS
TIMES**



DARLENE LEE

100 TIMES A WINNER

INSIDE: NEWS • CSATKA • IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD FESTIVAL • THE CHURCH IN THE WOODS • POETRY • BRADFORD HORSE DRIVE • SUGAR SHANE • JOHN CONNORS ON PAVEE HISTORY • THE SOUTH SHORE GYPSIES • GEMMA LEES – OPINION • DARLENE LEE

EDITORIAL



Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2023 edition of the Traveller's Times Magazine. Since our last issue Travellers' Times have been continuing to work with the TT Vision trainee cohort to produce a brand-new podcast series. The team worked with Bespoken Media to train our participants to develop and produce audio stories, capturing voices that represent the lives and interests of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. In this exclusive podcast series, we are bringing your voices to life. You will now not only read, but also hear the wide range of conversations with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists, campaign workers and everyday people on topics that include heritage, arts, fighting discrimination and much more. As the winter season draws closer, get cosy, grab a cuppa, head to the Travellers' Times website and have a listen: www.travellerstimes.co.uk

Liza Mortimer, Deputy Project Manager at the Travellers' Times

LIZA MORTIMER
© DAN
HAWORTH-SALTER

TRAVELLERS TIMES

SHOUT OUT

A big shout out to all our GRT prisoner group readers. Thanks Kev, for your correspondence and thank you Kevin for your story The Water of Life – which we published online on our website. We have sent you a screenshot copy of your story as it appears on our website.

NEWS FLASH

Culture in Common, a New Forest arts and culture programme, is asking people from Gypsy and Traveller communities in the New Forest to contact them if they have an idea for a creative project they would like to make happen up to March 2025.

Gypsy and Traveller communities have played an important role in the history and heritage of the New Forest, and Culture in Common is committed to creating work with Gypsy/Traveller residents and celebrating their contributions.

A project idea could cover any aspect of creativity, such as arts, craft, music or theatre. The team has been talking to residents about reviving endangered crafts such as leatherwork, hazel fence-making, halter-making and chap-making. Get in touch if you like the sound of these, especially if you are part of a group that wants to sign up for a set of free pilot workshops.

For more information, go to www.cultureincommon.co.uk
To contact them with an idea, email cultureincommon@energise.me



COVER PHOTO: DARLENE LEE © ESZTER HALASI

The Travellers' Times is published by Rural Media. EDITOR: Mike Doherty, CONSULTANT: Damian Le Bas, PROJECT MANAGER: Julie Colman, DEPUTY PROJECT MANAGER: Liza Mortimer, COURSE LEADER: Dan Haworth-Salter, TECHNICAL ASSISTANT: Callum Neville, DESIGN: thinkblinkdesign.com. 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. CONTACT US AT: The Travellers' Times, Packers House, 25 West Street, Hereford, HR4 0BX. 01432 344039 | travellerstimes@ruralmedia.co.uk | www.travellerstimes.org.uk

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NEWS



JOSEPH DRAPER WITH HIS GRANDDAUGHTER
JOSIE COOPER AT 3 YEARS OF AGE.
© JOSEPHINE COOPER

JOSIE COOPER RAISES £1,545 FOR ALZHEIMER'S CHARITY

Josie Cooper, 50, has made her family proud by taking part in a sponsored walk in memory of her grandad to raise money for an Alzheimer's charity.

The Memory Walk for the Alzheimer's Society – who support people affected by this debilitating illness – took place in Windsor on 10th September, and Josie, who lives near Chelmsford, was one of many taking part. Josephine raised £1,545.

Alzheimer's is a gradually progressive brain disorder that causes problems with memory, thinking and behaviour. Most people who have Alzheimer's will then go on to develop dementia.

"It's affected so many people in my family," says Josephine. "My grandad Joseph Draper, who died 15 years ago, had it and so have a lot of his close relatives," she added.

"My grandad was a very active man, he kept and bred horses and went to many horse fairs. But he started to forget things and then one day he just said; 'I don't feel right'."

By Mike Doherty/TT News



JESS SMITH (CENTRE) COLLECTS HER BEM © JESS SMITHA

FOR THE TRAVELLING PEOPLE

Author and campaigner Jess Smith has been awarded a British Empire Medal for services to the Scottish Traveller community.

"It was a huge surprise when I found out, so for the Travelling people, I accepted it," said Smith, the author of six books about the Scottish Traveller community.

Jess Smith collected her Medal from Stephen Leckie, Lord-Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross at Crieff Hydro, Scotland, on July 24th.

The award was a "positive step" for all Scottish Travellers said Jess Smith. "It made me realise that when society recognises the culture it brings a closer understanding, and for the future, an opening of doors," she added.

As well as writing, Jess Smith was the tireless leader of a successful campaign to save the Tinker's Heart, Argyll, from destruction.

For centuries, the Tinker's Heart was the Gypsy Wedding Place where the Travelling people of Scotland would go to get married. The Heart remains a site of pilgrimage to many Travellers.

By Mike Doherty/TT News

ARCHBISHOPS VISIT TRAVELLERS

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have met with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people advocating for a new initiative aimed at reaching out to these communities. The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Friendly Churches initiative will encourage and signpost churches to do more to welcome people from these communities.

On Friday 9th June, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, spent time with Gypsies and Travellers in Poole, Dorset, meanwhile, the Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell walked with the Bishop of Carlisle to the Appleby Horse Fair in Cumbria, the biggest annual gathering of Travellers in the country.

Ivy Manning, Project Co-ordinator, said: "I'm delighted to be part of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Friendly Churches, it's something that gives hope to my people. For too long we've felt scapegoated by wider society. Today marks a positive beginning of something new."



THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY VISITS POOLE
© REV JONATHAN HERBERT



GYPSY AND TRAVELLER EXHIBITION IN HULL

If you are near Hull, then make sure you go to see a new exhibition celebrating local Gypsy and Traveller heritage, which is now open at the city's Streetlife Museum.

The permanent exhibition - complete with a life-sized model of a piebald horse - has been carefully created with members from local Gypsy and Traveller communities, and with extensive support from York Travellers Trust.

Violet Cannon, Chief Executive of York Travellers Trust said that she was pleased to have been involved in this work, adding that the Museum had been receptive to the Trust's thoughts and ideas.

"We have been allowed the freedom to create something that we can be proud of," said Violet Cannon.

Robin Diaper, Curator of Maritime & Social History, said that it had been a great opportunity to bring a previously hidden history into their galleries.

"Once we started looking and learning from our partners, we found that connections to Gypsy and Traveller history ran deep in Hull and surrounding regions," said Robin Diaper.



TRAVELLER HERITAGE CELEBRATED AT AUCHINDRAIN

The history and culture of the Travelling community was celebrated recently with a weekend of events held at Auchindrain, Scotland's last remaining township.

The "Travelling Together" weekend included the construction of a traditional bow tent, folk music, demonstrations of basket and paper flower making, an exhibition of Traveller life, songs and stories performed by Jimmy Williamson, son of famous Traveller and storyteller Duncan Williamson, as well as a tombola generously supported by businesses in Inveraray.

Auchindrain Director Bob Clark commented: "We aimed to reflect and celebrate aspects of Travellers' lives as their history and heritage is very closely tied with the history of Auchindrain.

"The presence of Jimmy Williamson provided a lot of entertainment and education for visitors. He is committed to continue and preserve his father's legacy and traditions.

"The final word belonged to one of our weekend visitors who wrote 'The Traveller exhibition was fascinating. A way of life that must be kept'," added Bob.

MAIN: DONNA-MARIE AND TOM © CATH MULDOWNNEY. FAR LEFT: JOE AND CORINNA WINDAS – KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO THE EXHIBITION; PHOTO © EXHIBITION. LEFT: A REPRODUCTION OF A TRADITIONAL TRAVELLER BOW OR BENDER TENT, © EXHIBITION

'HEALTHY HOLIDAYS' FOR YOUNG TRAVELLERS

Traveller young people from West Yorkshire have been enjoying 'Healthy Holidays' this summer - thanks to a Leeds-based Gypsy and Traveller charity.

During the school summer holidays, Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange ran 23 trips and outings for a total of 63 Traveller children and young people.

Tom, aged 12, said that the trips were great. "I really enjoyed it. I thought the things we done was good. My favourite trip was West Leeds activity centre," said Tom. "Me and my friends had lots of fun on the boats."

Donna-Marie was another young person who went on the trips. "I really enjoyed it," said Donna. "I liked going on the trips and days out and seeing people. It kept me busy during the six-week holidays."

Rachel Trafford, CEO of Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange, said that she hoped to run a similar programme of holidays and days out again next year - to help Traveller young people to "learn and grow outside of school".

Mike Doherty/TT News



GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS STARTING UNIVERSITY DOUBLES IN A YEAR

Over 600 Gypsy and Traveller students started a degree course at university or college last year, which is more than twice as many as the year before - government figures released earlier this year reveal.

Of those entering university last year, 410 Gypsy and Traveller students started a degree in business and management, 60 in design, creative and performing arts, and 10 in education and teaching, with the rest not known.

Gypsy and Traveller education experts generally agree that the continuing year-on-year rise since 2011 is due to two main factors: more Gypsies and Travellers are going to university, and when they are there, they are becoming more confident about revealing their ethnic identity.

Ground-breaking work by campaigners based in and around Buckinghamshire New University has signed up many universities and colleges to 'pledge' to do more for Gypsy, Traveller, Showmen and Boater students.

Mike Doherty/TT News



"WINTER IS COMING" - BRISTOL TRAVELLER SITE EVICTION

On Monday 9th October Bristol City Council evicted 100 people from a New Traveller site, just before the winter.

"We have made a real community on this site, we had to take in people from other sites that had been evicted over the past few months, this is why the site has so many people living on it," said Lorna, a 30-year-old recycling consultant who lives at the site.

The Dovercourt Road site, located in Horfield in the north of Bristol, has been in use as a site for many Travellers since the 1990s. Once an old depot, the site has been a home for over 100 people for the past year, but the land has now been earmarked for redevelopment into new houses in 2024.

"Knowing that winter is coming and we will have to be roadside again is worrying," said Kate, another resident of the site. "Coming home from work and having the safety of the site is such a relief especially when winter can be harder," added Kate.

Faye Freeman/TT News

MAIN: TRAVELLER PRIDE © BELA VARADI. FAR LEFT: © BRETT JORDAN. LEFT: THE SITE ON DOVERCOURT ROAD - NOW EVICTED © FAYE FREEMAN

TRAVELLER PRIDE LAUNCH HELPLINE FOR LGBT+ TRAVELLERS

Traveller Pride have launched the first UK helpline for LGBT+ Traveller people to use to speak to a fully qualified mental health practitioner. The helpline which will be open on Monday evenings (from 5pm - 8:30pm) will provide a space for LGBT+ Travellers to seek informal and confidential advice or information.

Tyler Hatwell, Director of Traveller Pride and a qualified psychotherapist, said that the helpline had been a goal since Traveller Pride was founded.

"This is something we have been wanting to do since we launched, we're thrilled to bring it to life," he said. "LGBT+ Travellers can often feel isolated and like they won't be understood, accepted or held; I hope this is a space where those concerns aren't there and they can bring and be themselves."

The helpline telephone number is included on our help and advice contacts on the back page of this magazine.

THE MIRACLE OF CSATKA

Around St. Mary's Day, the Csátka Farewell is held every year. At this time, Roma families who believe in the mystery of the Holy Well in Csátka make a pilgrimage to the village in the Komárom-Esztergom county in Hungary from all over the Carpathian Basin. This year I visited the Csátka Farewell for the first time and it became clear to me on the spot that as a Roma photographer, I had the duty to photograph it.



PHOTOS AND WORDS BY ESZTER HALASI/TT

PHOTOS AND WORDS BY ESZTER HALASI/TT

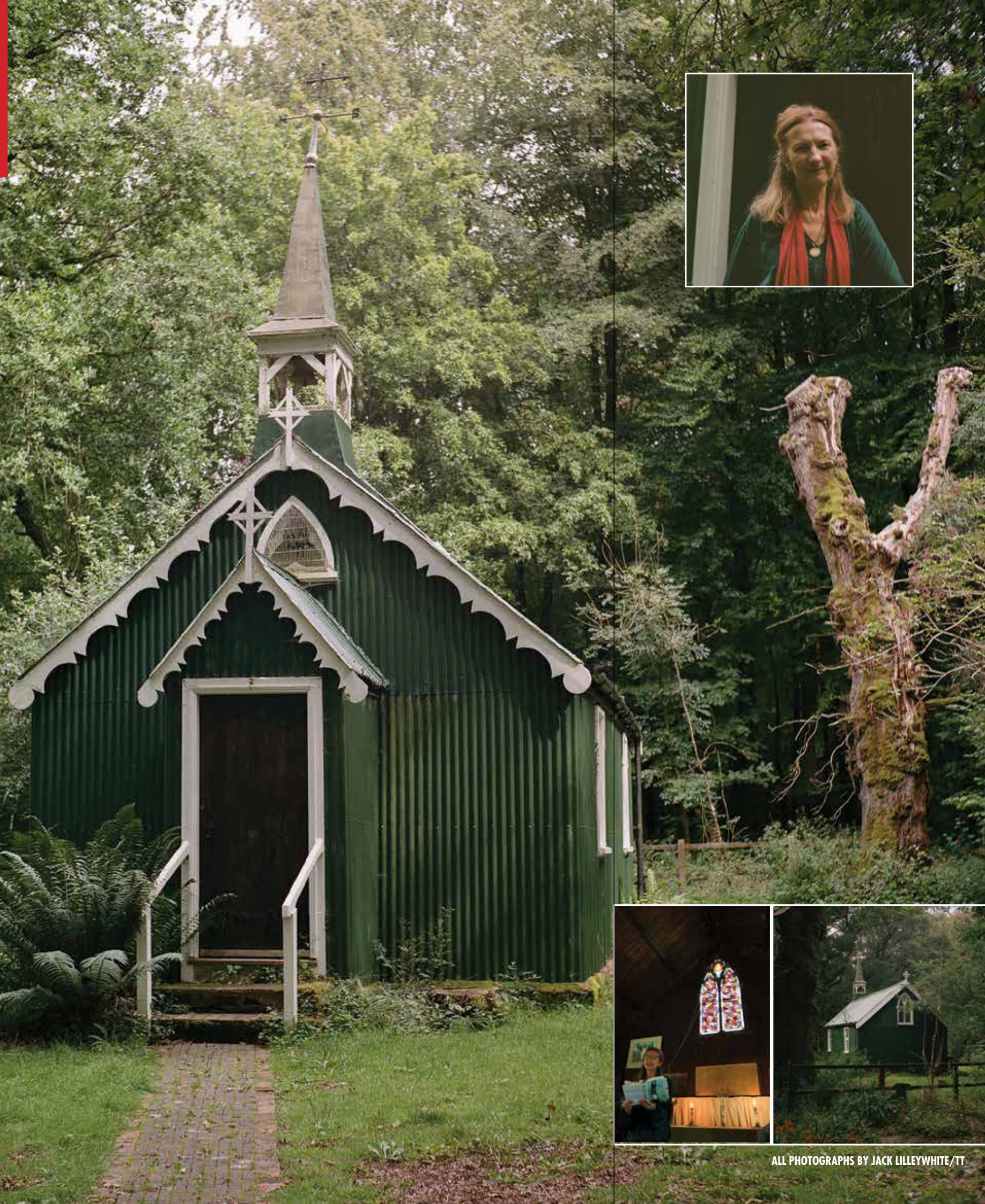
IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

The Horsedrawn Camp and Orrible Entertainments organised the "It's Not the End of the World" music festival for the first time earlier this year.

Contrary to my expectations, it wasn't only the New Traveller community who were there and some members of the Romany and Irish Traveller community were represented at the festival. All the different communities at the festival maintained good relations with each other, and I was convinced during my interviews that they all supported each other.



GYPSY CHURCH



THE CHURCH IN THE WOODS, BRAMDEAN, HAMPSHIRE

The beautiful old iron church was built in 1883 and was bequeathed to the local people by Louisa Frances Katherine Bishop, the widow of the Reverend Bishop who caused the church to be built. Katherine had given instructions that on her death she would give £2000 to her trustees to pay the vicar of Bramdean to give services to the local commoners, charcoal burners and Gypsies. Since that time every vicar has carried out her wishes and now the Reverend Christopher is continuing in that tradition.

SHELTER

In the Valley where Brooms grow stands the Church in the Woods, all are welcome.

Tracing a path through bramble and bush, our boots squelching in the mud, our ears attuned to the bell, we come to an opening and there in all its glory stands the weathered old tin tabernacle with splinters of sunlight accentuating its beauty. Entranced I move forward as if under a spell, a red kite circling above, the sound of the bell loud in my ears, people saying hello, nice to see you and as I sit outside on the pews I hear voices, more like whispers, perhaps the tongue of folk who once lived on the common:

'We used to come 'ere, me and romiphen, all dressed up in our best togs. We'd gillie the old hymns, didn't know all the words on account of not being able to read properly but we prayed for goodness, daya would say 'the Lord's kushtie.'

'Us Gypsies sat right next to the gadje's we married 'ere, said goodbye to our romiphen, watched the water trickle down our chavies 'eads when they were christened. With 'and on 'eart we loved this church.'

The voices faded and as I sang *'Dear Lord and Father of mankind* I sensed the presence of those who had long gone, some of whom may have been my own romiphen, hop pickers, peg makers, charcoal burners, any one of them and they had all sought shelter here in the Church in the Woods, a Church that Gypsies call their own, a church that welcomes everyone.

'Take from our souls the strain and stress, And let our ordered lives confess, The beauty of thy peace.'

Duvel parik tute: God bless you.

By Raine Geoghegan, Romani poet

Raine Geoghegan recently performed her poetry and prose at the Church in the Woods, Bramdean, and wrote Shelter for the Travellers' Times.

ROMANI WORDS:

Romiphen: Our people

Gillie: Sing

Daya: Mother

Kushtie: Good

Gadjes: Non-Gypsies

Bramdean is called the valley where the brooms grow.



PHOTO FEATURE

BRADFORD IN MEMORY OF SHARKEY LOWTHER

The 2023 annual Silsden to Ilkley drive in memory of Sharkey Lowther, organised by his daughter Sarah, raised over £200 for the Sue Ryder Manorlands Hospice. The drive was well attended, with plenty braving the river despite the sudden drop in temperature that August weekend. Apparently, it 'wasn't that cold' once you were in!

ALL PHOTOS © CATH MULDOWNNEY



SUGAR SHANE

SUGAR SHANE ON THE UNFAIRGROUND STAGE,
GLASTONBURY 2023 © BELA VARADI

Music first came into my life around 13 years old, when I'd go over to Epsom site to see my Granny. I would pester for CDs and they would tell me how good it was to go raving up North in the clubs, and that's when I thought I would love to be a MC one day.

I was listening to other MCs/rappers music, and I'd go to Staines on a Sunday and have a MC battle with the boys in the car park. They would always know me as Sugar Shane, as that was the nickname I got from my old boxing coach Johnny Edwards in Guildford years ago.

My name is Shane Eastwood, aka, Sugar Shane. I am 30 years old from London, Feltham.

My career started in 2014, a DJ who is a friend, took me on a pirate music station and he saw potential in me. He would tell me how to write to music and that's when I started writing over garage and house beats. I would travel with him playing in

clubs when he was booked.

I kept a low profile in the garage/house scene because I thought some people don't like Gypsies and thought letting them know that I'm a Gypsy wouldn't do me any favours for my music career.

Me and my wife went to Spain in 2019 and we made friends with the famous Facebook stars, The Bald Builders. I spoke to one of The Bald Builders, Brad, and said I was a Traveller and do music. He asked me, 'do you ever class yourself as a Gypsy MC when you rap?' I said no, because I thought it would affect my music career. He told me to not worry about the people and be myself. That's when I came right out of my shell as the real Sugar Shane.

A year later I was doing Gypsy rap Freestyle in the car park hitting over 1.5 million views on Youtube. After that, I left the rave scene and started a music career as a rapper being myself, representing my Gypsy back-

ground and I now get more love and respect for being myself in life.

Now I have built up a fan base for Gypsies and Gorgers, who support me and show so much love for my music. They motivate me to make more music so that's what keeps me going. It means everything to me representing my background and I'm very proud person to say I'm the first Gypsy rapper to hit Glastonbury. What a big achievement that was for me and the crowd was unbelievable!

I have lots more music releases to come and look forward to releasing them. I aspire to be hitting bigger stages, concerts and more festivals and more success to provide for my family, giving them the best and making lots of memories.

God bless everyone, I wish you all the luck in the world. Go and chase your dreams and don't let anyone stop you.

Interview by Liza Mortimer/TT

HISTORY

THE SOUTH SHORE GYPSIES

These photos from the turn of the 19th century show some of the people from the Romany Gypsy community camped on South Shore, on the empty wasteland and sand dunes at the southern end of Blackpool. In the background you can see the Blackpool Pleasure Beach complex, which had recently been built.

Sharon Heppell, a genealogist and local historian whose ancestors were part of the community, has been studying the South Shore Romany Gypsies for decades

There were several different families in the community - Coopers, Boswells, Smiths, Lees etc - but for the most part they were closely related by blood, by marriage or by association. As you can see from the photos, the women made a living from telling fortunes during the holiday season, whilst the men would probably have been away at the fairs a lot of the time dealing in horses.



AMELA, DAUGHTER OF LEMENTENI SMITH, AND SHARON HEPPELL'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER © SHARON HEPPELL



TOBIAS BOSWELL, STANDING ON THE RIGHT, WITH SECOND WIFE JENNIE DUTTON (BAREHEADED) IN FRONT OF HER FORTUNE TELLING BOOTH © ROBERT DAWSON COLLECTION



TRAFALGAR BOSWELL (IN THE WAISTCOAT) WITH HIS WIFE ATHALIAH WHATNELL AND THEIR CHILDREN. THE MAN ON THE FAR LEFT IS PROBABLY TRAFALGAR'S BROTHER © ROBERT DAWSON COLLECTION



INTERIOR OF A SOUTH SHORE GYPSY TENT © SHARON HEPPELL

Before arriving at South Shore in the late 1800s, the community had travelled throughout Britain and Ireland holding dances in public buildings in major towns and cities, but also opening up their encampments to a fee-paying general public so that they could see how the "real Gypsies" lived and worked. Many fortunes would have been told within those encampments too!

The community was finally evicted from South Shore by the Pleasure Beach landowners in 1910. Some of the families moved into houses in Blackpool, Lementeni Smith – Sharon Heppell's great-great-grandmother opened a guest house in a street adjoining the Pleasure Beach, and other families moved to live in other favourite locations in Lancashire and Cheshire.

Watch out for the full story about this fascinating community, which will be published on the Travellers' Times website soon.

www.travellerstimes.org.uk

If you have family connections to the South Shore Gypsies, Sharon would like to hear from you.

She can be contacted at:

editor@rtfhs.org.uk

Sharon Heppell and Mike Doherty.

A FEROCIOUS FIGHT



"When I look at my nieces and nephews, all I ever wanted was them not to be called P***** in school, but they've already been called it and they are ten now – and they've been called it for years – then you realise that the fight is such a ferocious fight."

John Connors, the award-winning film and TV director, producer and actor is clear about the root

cause of the racism young Irish Travellers – or Mincéir and Pavee in their own language – face today; it is down to centuries of state violence.

"The whole mission in Ireland was to resettle us," says Connors, who directed and presented an award-winning documentary about Irish Travellers. He adds that the narrative that Irish Travellers were originally Irish people settled people uprooted by the potato famine, or, before that, the conquest of Ireland by the English, is false.

"We did DNA studies, we did linguistic studies, we got the top anthropologists in Ireland, who all said no anthropologist ever believed that narrative, because in no time in human history have a people become nomadic after being settled. The question isn't when did Travellers start travelling, it's when did settled people start settling."

Connors then describes the infamous 1963 'Haughey report' which specifically focussed on Ireland's Travellers. The report, says Connors, was published by a government commission led by minister Charles Haughey – later to become Taoiseach – and its task was to find "the final solution" to the 'itinerant problem'.

"We had elected officials in that commission; all different kinds of politicians; talking about sterilising Traveller women and castrating men, or sending them out to Spike Island [prison camp], or to take Traveller children away from their parents."

The report only accelerated the Irish State's ongoing forced assimilation and settlement of Irish Traveller identity and nomadism, adds Connors.

"Only 24 per cent of Travellers live on sites in Ireland, so they mostly live in council estates," says Connors. "Young Travellers are growing up without having a great grasp of their language and their culture and then going to school and being discriminated for it. We don't need to be Sigmund Freud to know that when you mess with someone's identity, it's catastrophic."

"It's a war of attrition," adds Connors. "It's colonial tactics. Five hundred years ago two-thirds of the Irish population travelled – and it was the British monarch that settled the population. The settled population became bigger, and the want to travel became smaller, until all that was left was the Mincéir and Pavee. The governments do not realise that by destroying us, they're destroying Irish culture and history. They want us to assimilate. We want to integrate for sure, but never assimilate."

By Lisa Smith and Mike Doherty

OPINION

TOP LEFT: JOHN CONNORS
© SHANE CONNORS
BELOW: PAVEE IN DONEGAL TOWN,
EIRE, 1958 © TONY WHELAN.
PAVEE CHILDREN IN ANGLESEY, WALES,
1963 © GEOFF CHARLES.



GYPSY WATER

I recently came across a perfume called 'Gypsy Water'. My instant reaction was (a) what the heck does this actually smell like and (b) I, as a Gypsy do produce water but I wouldn't recommend dabbing it behind your ears.

I decided to look a bit further into this perfume and it costs £140 for a 50ml bottle and comes with a variety of complementary products including a £40 bodywash and a £34 hand cream. The description of the perfume on the company's website describes it as "an ode to the beauty of Romani culture, its unique customs, intimate beliefs and distinguished way of living." The scent is apparently "woody" to "evoke the fever of...nights spent in the forest". A quick online search revealed many more products marketed with a similar stereotypical romanticised 'Gypsy' aesthetic, including dresses and hand creams and such like.

In truth, the history of British Gypsies living in forests isn't so warm and cosy. Gypsies of Epping Forest were forcibly evicted in 1897 and Gypsies of the New Forest were corralled into compounds with no running water or sanitation in the Twenties before being forcibly resettled into council housing. As late as 2016, a Romany Gypsy family living nomadically around the New Forest reported "daily hate", necessitating them to teach their children that the "daily abuse...is only words".

Using 'Gypsy' to evoke a vibe of freedom, travel, nomadism and a 'boho' aesthetic is cultural appropriation, a term which originated in the 1980s as academics began to discuss colonialism and its effects on non-white cultures. It happens when a majority group uses cultural elements of a minority group in a disrespectful, exploitative, or stereotypical way.

Romany Gypsies have been oppressed both in Britain and globally for many, many years.

In Britain this began with the 'Egyptians Act' of 1530 which was aimed at ridding Britain of Gypsies and its update in 1554 which allowed them to remain so long as they gave up their traditional culture, settled and took up non 'naughty, idle and ungodly' occupations. Successive acts since then have limited Gypsies' freedoms and oppressed our culture. Globally, Gypsies have been subject to laws which have enslaved, expelled or stripped us of our culture for over a thousand years, so it's very clear who has the upper hand and sadly, it isn't often us. Stealing (or exploiting) elements of or stereotypes based on our culture and history for others' profit is a true slap in the face for modern-day Gypsies.

The contemporary cosmetic industry alone is set to have a revenue of £214 million this year in the UK, but none of this money is making it into actual Gypsies' back pockets and that's an issue when a University of Birmingham and YouGov poll conducted last year found that 44.6% of respondents viewed actual, (rather than marketing buzzword), Gypsies and Irish Travellers negatively. The Equality and Human Rights Commission adds that some Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have reported hiding their ethnic identities in order to access employment and other services and that Roma are often in low-paid employment, face discrimination in agency work and often work informally for 'cash in hand'.

But these truths don't sell perfumes, dresses or hand creams, so please don't buy 'Gypsy Water' or any other product that our ethnicity is cynically and disrespectfully plastered on. Search out actual Gypsy-owned companies and deny the other brands of the only thing they seemingly care about – which is profit.

By Gemma Lees/TT

PHOTO © BELA VARADI

YOUTH TRAVELLERS' TIMES



DARLENE LEE HAS WON LOTS AND LOTS OF AWARDS ALREADY! © ESZTER HALASI

'GUTSY' DARLENE LEE: A HUNDRED TIMES A WINNER

Showjumper Darlene Lee and her family are celebrating after the 'gutsy' six-year-old grabbed second place in the 10-year-old and under category in this year's Hickstead Al Shira'aa international show.

"I want to do it a hundred times again," said Darlene, who lives in Ashford, Kent, where she also competes for Bethersden Primary, her local school.

Hickstead is the heart of British showjumping and the Al Shira 'aa International Show is its biggest annual event. Many young showjumpers, who will later go on to become household names and top competitors, cut their teeth as youngsters in the show's Mini Challenge age ten and under category.

"I don't think Darlene realises what she has achieved," says Emily, Darlene's mum. "I mean she's proud, but coming second when she's four years younger than the ten-year-old age limit is unheard of in this sport."

Darlene rode two different ponies in the Hickstead Mini Challenge, explains Emily. Both are Welsh ponies, with Venus being 24 years old and Amy 14.

Darlene's family has been around horses for generations, and showjumping is in the blood – Emily's mum competed as a child and Darlene has three cousins who also compete. Darlene's ponies are usually brought from horse fairs, but Venus was brought over from Ireland.

"Not many Traveller children compete in showjumping," adds Emily. "But more probably would if it was seen as a Traveller way of competing with horses. You need to be gutsy to take those jumps and Darlene is very gutsy. Falling off and then getting back on is all part of it."

The Travellers' Times also spoke to Jodi Randall, a professional equestrian and qualified instructor, who both sponsors and trains Darlene.

"I've been working with Darlene for about 18 months and she is a really talented pupil," says Jodi. "She is also my youngest pupil and it's absolutely unusual for a girl that age to do so well and come second in that age range, although next year we will go back to Hickstead and do one place better!"

Going to shows and competing can be expensive and Darlene would like to give a big thanks to her sponsors who help to support her and her family: Crown Construction SE LTD, Curry Lounge, New Romney, and Rosebuds VIP K9 Services.

The Travellers' Times wishes Darlene Lee the best of luck and we look forward to hearing more about her exploits in the world of showjumping!

Mike Doherty/YTT News

HELPLINES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER NATIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS

COMMUNITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

Legal advice and support for Gypsies and Travellers facing eviction or planning issues living in caravans or boats.

0121 685 8595

DERBYSHIRE GYPSY LIAISON GROUP

Provides valuable assistance and information to the Gypsy community in Derbyshire.

07799 443830

info@dglg.org

DRIVE2SURVIVE

A national GRT led campaign charity set up to oppose the new anti-Traveller laws. For advice and information call

07840 979302 or 07903 198022

www.drive2survive.org.uk

GATEHERTS

Community Led Organisation For Gypsy, Roma and Travellers.

https://gateherts.org.uk

01707 247 088

hub@gateherts.org.uk

FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS

Work to end racism and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

01273 234777

fft@gypsy-traveller.org

www.gypsy-traveller.org

LEEDS GYPSY AND TRAVELLER EXCHANGE

Confidential support and advocacy for Gypsies and Travellers living in or passing through West Yorkshire.

0113 2402444

LGBT TRAVELLER PRIDE

Advice and support for LGBTQ+ Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

07395 355 066

LINCOLNSHIRE TRAVELLER INITIATIVE

Connecting Gypsy and Traveller people with services in the Lincolnshire area.

07503 878 740

ONE CALL AWAY

Gypsy & Traveller Mental Health Support.

07748 997617

onecallawaytoday@gmail.com

PRIDE OF ROMANI

Community-led organisation based in Cheshire.

prideofromani@gmail.com

REPORT RACISM GRT

Report Hate Crime against Gypsies Roma and Travellers.

https://reportracismgrt.com

ROMA SUPPORT GROUP

Supporting and empowering the Roma community.

0794 908 9778

info@romasupportgroup.org.uk

TRAVELLER MOVEMENT

Providing support and advice nationally to Gypsies and Travellers visit our website.

www.travellermovement.org.uk

0207 607 2002

info@travellermovement.org.uk

TRAVELLING AHEAD

Support & advice for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across Wales.

0808 802 0025

travellingahead@tgcymru.org.uk

YORK TRAVELLERS TRUST

Supporting Gypsy and Traveller people in York and surrounding area.

01904 630526

TRAVELLERS TIMES

GENERAL

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

0800 9177 650

CHILD LINE

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

MIND

For better mental health.

0300 123 3393

www.mind.org.uk

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Providing physical, financial and emotional support to people living with cancer and their families.

0808 808 00 00

**7 days a week,
8am-8pm**

www.macmillan.org.uk

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

HELPLINE

0808 2000 247

SAMARITANS

116 123

www.samaritans.org

WOMEN'S AID (DOMESTIC ABUSE)

www.womensaid.org

Travellers' Times has loads of other useful advice and support numbers on our website visit
www.travellerstimes.org.uk/advice

