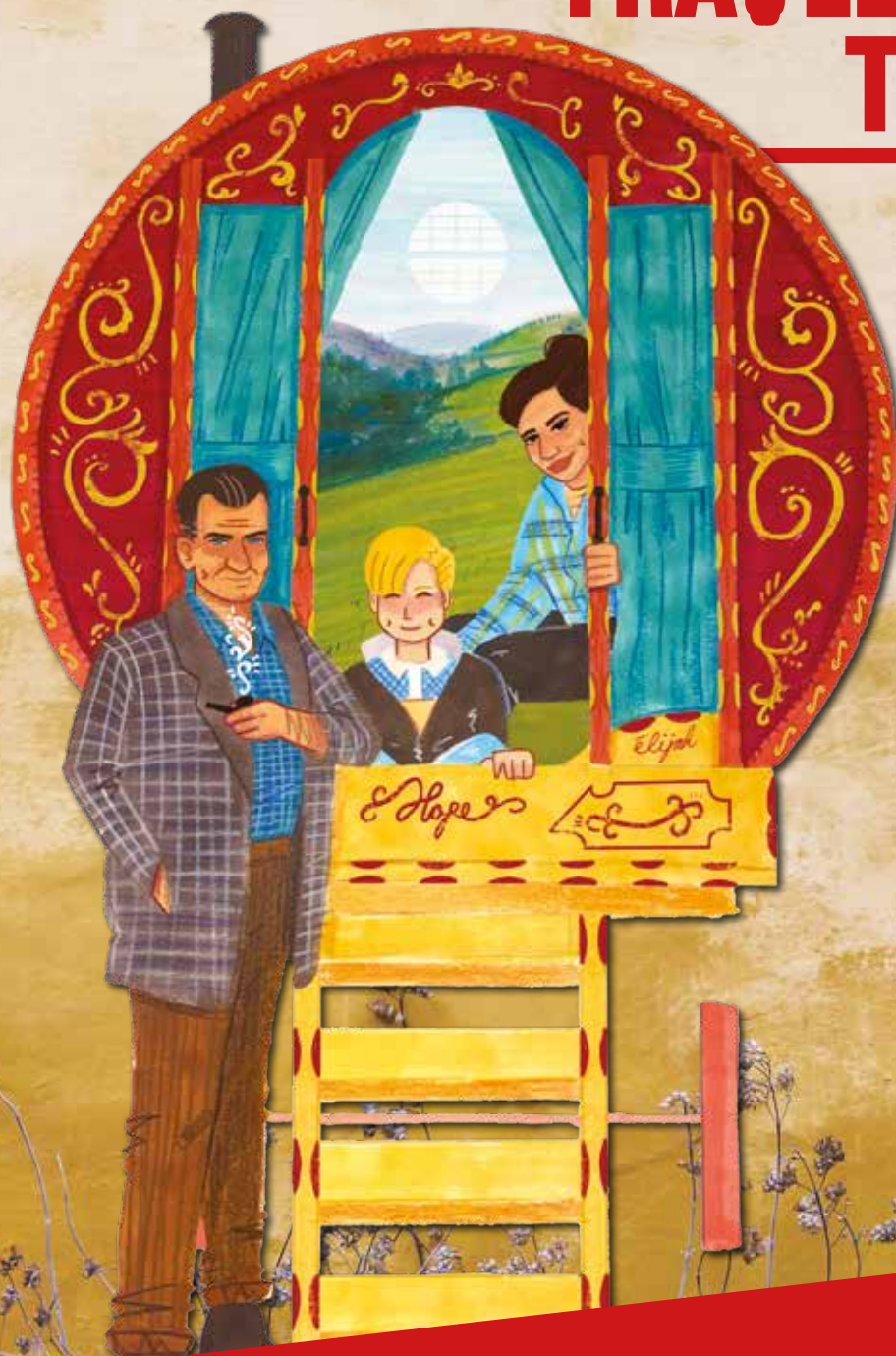


**THE MAGAZINE FOR GYPSIES, ROMA & TRAVELLERS**

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**TRAVELLERS  
TIMES**



# HOPE

**WITH MY ART, I WANT TO SHOW THE BEAUTY OF OUR CULTURE**

**THE CREATIVE ISSUE – INSIDE:** APPLEBY FAIR PAST AND FUTURE | EDIE SMITH  
FILM | CHRIS MCDONAGH | BRINLEY CLARKE | ROYAL CROWN DERBY  
CHARMAINE ABDUL KARIM | OLIVIA HAMMOND | ELIJAH VARDON | ACKLEY BRIDGE



## By Travellers' Times Youth Editor Lisa Smith

Welcome to issue 68 of the Travellers' Times magazine. This year marks 50 years since the first World Romani Congress, which took place in Orpington near London. It was a crucial point in our history as Romani people, and started a worldwide political fight for equality and gave us our unifying flag and anthem. This year, activists from around the world have been brought together by the Co-initiator of the first World Romani Congress, Grattan Puxon, to create a series of online events as part of a programme to connect Romani communities across the globe, celebrate Romani history and culture, but also critically reflect on the ongoing challenges that are still faced by Romani people worldwide. Check out [www.romanistan.com](http://www.romanistan.com) for recordings of the events and information on the next sessions. In the UK, the latest challenge we face is the Government's new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. This draconian new proposed law will not only restrict protest but will also criminalise unauthorised Traveller camps. Until now, trespassing was a civil matter, but as part of the new police bill, it will be treated as a crime and

IN THE UK,  
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AND COURTS  
BILL

### PHOTO LEFT:

Lisa Smith  
© Abbas  
Mohammad

### PHOTO RIGHT:

Mania Petrovic  
and Lee Wade,  
Roma London,  
and Mike Doherty,  
Travellers' Times,  
take part in the  
international virtual  
Romanistan rallies  
and celebrations to  
mark International  
Roma Day  
© Ludovic  
Pujol Ayyoubi



Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised camps could face up to three months in prison, a large fine, and the seizing of their vehicles. The new law will affect England and Wales – but not Scotland. The new law when it comes in, applies if you have “intent to reside” in your vehicle/caravan “for any period” and the police or landowner believe that you are likely to cause distress or disturbance. There are fears that this law has the potential to legislate our ancient cultural practice of nomadism out of existence. However, we understand that lawyers are already geared up to challenge the new laws and if our history tells us anything, it shows us we are resilient and where there is a will, we will always find a way to ensure our culture survives.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: HOPE © ELIJAH VARDOL

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PHOTO: Appleby Fair  
© Natasha Quarmby/Fields of Light

## NEWS



### DOCUMENTING THE LIVES OF GYPSIES, ROMA AND TRAVELLERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

The Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS) will document the lives of ethnic and religious minorities during the UK COVID-19 pandemic – and the lockdowns.

Taking part in the survey will mean that your experience during the pandemic is given a voice, it will help provide reliable and comprehensive data and inform positive change for minority ethnic people, including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. Your experience of Covid matters.

Find out more: [www.evensurvey.co.uk](http://www.evensurvey.co.uk). Take the survey here: [bit.ly/evensurvey](http://bit.ly/evensurvey). Or call freephone: **0808 129 6800**

Everyone who completes the survey will receive a gift voucher as a thank you. Participation is voluntary and confidential.

### APPLEBY FAIR SET FOR MID-AUGUST AS LONG AS CORONAVIRUS IS KEPT AT BAY

Appleby Horse Fair will go ahead later this summer on the middle weekend of August, opening on Thursday August 12th, say organisers.

The Fair, that has historically taken place in late June, was cancelled last year due to Covid-19 and postponed this year. At one point the fair was slated to be cancelled this year as well.

However, Billy Welch, who is the Romany representative on the fair's co-ordinating committee, promised Appleby Fair goers that the most popular event for UK Gypsies and Travellers would go ahead at some point later in the summer.

Whether the fair was going ahead or not this year hung in the balance until the local council, police, Appleby town residents and Gypsy representatives thrashed out a new date at meetings earlier this year.

Initial objections and council proposals to block horse traffic from some of the streets of Appleby town were "smoothed over" and dropped, said Billy. "The meeting went well and the joint agreement is that as long as the pandemic continues to die down the fair will open on August 12th.

"Appleby Horse Fair is on as long as the coronavirus pandemic is kept at bay and further restrictions are not put into place," he added, whilst urging Gypsies and Travellers not to try to attend on any other date.

Billy Welch also revealed that he had caught the virus during the pandemic, and, although making a full recovery, he described the virus as "not nice" and said he has now had the Covid-19 vaccine and urged all Gypsies and Travellers to do the same.

The Travellers' Times will be there with a photographer to record this historic event.

Keep an eye on the Travellers' Times website and social media for regular updates on Appleby Horse Fair.

**Visit [www.travellerstimes.com](http://www.travellerstimes.com)**

**Mike Doherty/TT News**





PHOTO MAIN: Edie Smith with one of her famous Christmas puddings!  
© Mike Doherty. ABOVE: Lemmy Smith, courtesy of the Smith family

## EDIE'S XMAS DOZEN!

### ROMANY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER MAKES TWELVE CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS, THE COALMAN AND THE VICAR

Edie Smith, a Romany great-grandmother from Wiltshire, made twelve Christmas puddings for her family and friends in a marathon cooking session with the help of her daughter and granddaughter-in-law.

So it's basically the last word which was 'granddaughter' now changes to 'granddaughter-in-law'. Elizabeth Shephard, Edie's daughter, and Becki, Elizabeth's daughter-in-law, decided to visit Edie in the Autumn last year, to spend the day with her cooking the puddings to help cheer them all up after their beloved Aunt Lemmy (Edie's sister) passed away earlier in the year.

Even the coalman and the vicar received one of Edie's famous Christmas puddings – cooked to a family recipe handed down over the generations from Britannia Black – Edie's mum.

Elizabeth Shephard posted the recipe in the Facebook group 'Traveller and Gypsy recipes and tips' and has given the Travellers' Times permission to publish the recipe on our website.

The Travellers' Times went to find out more.

We lost our beloved Aunt Lemmy in September and we miss her very much she was 88 years old, writes Elizabeth Shephard. A true Traveller woman. Mum was her sister and has taken losing her hard as have we all. So, to cheer Mum up I decided to make the puddings to help us all through our grieving.

Mum, my daughter-in-law and myself had a day together to make the puddings for the family. We made 12, which was for Mum's children, me and my sister, Mum's grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren.

Not all have their own families but the ones that do had a pudding made for them. Mum's coalman who brings her coal for her Aga cooker – we

can't leave him out. Also, the neighbour who pops round to see her, and also one for the vicar.

The recipe was Granny Britannia's who taught Mum, she taught me, now Becki has made her first batch with us this year.

The pots they are cooked in are many years old and handed down from older generations. We keep to the old traditional way of cooking. Everything from scratch, bacon puddings, curranty puddings, meat puddings, meat and vegetables cooked together. But it is lovely to see how the recipes evolve with the younger cooks.

We will be having ours and remembering our loved ones not with us. But look what they have left us. Love, family, tradition, and puddings.

**Mike Doherty/  
Elizabeth Shephard**



# FILM



## ROMANI AND TRAVELLER WOMEN ON SCREEN

The presence of Romani and Traveller women on screen is almost as old as cinema itself with some of the earliest projections of us in the 1897 British film production 'A Camp of Zingari Gypsies'. Since then, we have often been used as characters to create elements of mystery or fear or have a habit of criminality. Travellers' Times wanted to reflect on the issue of 'representation' in the media through the short film 'We Are Here' (2021). It explores the impact of narrow depictions on screen and shows how women are re-defining the dominant media narrative on what it means to be a Romani or Traveller women in British society. Available online at [www.travellerstimes.org.uk/WeAreHere](http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/WeAreHere).  
**By Lisa Smith**

## CONVERSATIONS WITH ROMANY WOMEN

My name is Millie Cooper, I am a 24-year-old British Romanichal woman from Kent. I am in my third year at Goldsmiths, University of London studying Performance, Politics and Society. I found myself in a position of privilege being able to study at university and I felt like through my studies it was the right time to create a passion project to give an authentic voice to our rich culture.

The idea for my documentary project came out of a desire to challenge media stereotypes around Gypsy women. I found growing up confusing due to lack of positive representation and experiences of discrimination and wanted to create a space through film where our voices can be heard

The film I created is called 'Conversations with Romany Women' which takes an in-depth look at the lives of Romany women and issues of race, identity, education and discrimination. I am extremely excited to release the documentary via Youtube and Instagram at the beginning of June. The film is dedicated to my Aunts, Nan and Nanny Farv.

**Follow @Romany\_women\_conversations on Instagram for the latest updates. By Millie Cooper**

PHOTO LEFT: The Wrench Family  
© Courtesy of Emaleigh Conn  
PHOTO RIGHT: Left to right  
Polly Cooper, Millie Cooper,  
Annie Smith © Millie Cooper

# SPEAKING OUT

PHOTO: Chris McDonagh © Evie Colman



## **'IF ALL TRAVELLERS AND GYPSIES SPOKE UP FOR OUR RIGHTS, OUR VOICE WOULD BE HARD TO IGNORE.'**

Chris McDonagh, who lives in Cardiff, is a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller rights campaigner and is the founder of the Twitter account **@TravellersRacism**. I set up the Twitter account called TravellersAgainst Racism back in April 2020. I was watching the documentary 'The Truth about Traveller Crime' and was disgusted at the way we were portrayed on national TV. How was it allowed? I felt like I had to do something to help change the public perception of our community, which led to the Twitter account. Since setting up the account, I've managed to educate people about us and help them see that we are more than the stereotype. I call out anti-Traveller racism and hate and try to hold people accountable for their racist and prejudiced words and actions. So far, we have managed to get public apologies, from huge multi-million-pound companies down to singular accounts. I also try to help with campaigns and often flag up anti-Traveller issues and racism. I have also convinced some businesses of the need for specialist training concerning the treatment of ethnic minorities, such as ours, which they have since implemented. While it's great to get an apology and help people

see us as more than the stereotype, our main aim is to hopefully educate people and see us for who we are, not what the media portrays us as.

They rarely see the work for charity we do, the food banks being filled, the helping the needy and homeless, the toys we give to charities for kids every Christmas, the helping of the elderly and ill. These are only a few examples that the media will rarely show. If we can spread these things and show the people who we really are, and not the stereotypes they tend to believe, then I think it would be a good stepping stone to help change the image the media have painted of us.

For the future, I hope our account, as well as the many brilliant pro-Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Twitter accounts, can help turn the tide of hate and sweep away the stereotypical ideas of our communities. I don't want the things I went through growing up, the racism and hate, the fighting because I was "different", to happen to my children, and I wish for a world with more understanding and acceptance of us all. For the sake of our children and our heritage, we need change. If all Travellers and Gypsies spoke up for our rights, our voice would be hard to ignore.

When not running the Twitter account, I am a self-employed gardener, and love to spend time with my family and raising my two boys with my beautiful wife of four years.

**By Chris McDonagh**



## 'THE WORLD IS WAKING UP', SAYS BRINLEY CLARKE

Brinley Clark is an award-winning senior designer at a global brand agency. He has over ten years of experience in the creative industries and has worked with some of the world's biggest brands.

For some people reading this article, this news may come as a surprise, as for others it's old news that I am a Traveller.

Despite being half Romany I spent the majority of my childhood with my mum's side of the family, as a Showman on the dizzy lights of the fairground, moving from town to town building up and pulling down hooplas and machines, a journey in creativity and craftsmanship that has seen me through to becoming a graphic designer, working with the world's biggest brands and winning some of the industry's most prestigious awards.

From the outside this journey seems somewhat glamorous but as the expression goes; 'It's not all bright lights and candy floss'. In fact, it's been a constant fight to prove people wrong and not be left behind; from teachers refusing to have me in a classroom to the 'p\*key' word being bandied about in a job interview. The prejudice I have encountered has been heart-breaking. But I am not going to wallow in self-pity because for every door that has been slammed shut another has slowly creaked open and it's these small breaks of light can turn into huge solar glares of opportunity. That's what we should focus on, the people out there bravely opening these doors, open-minded teachers and employers, they do exist. Yes, there are a few bad apples, but I can assure you that this mindset is becoming a thing of the past.

For example, the creative industry alone has changed dramatically in the past ten to fifteen years, yes there is still an imbalance in race and gender, but the tide is changing and large companies are generating waves of opportunities for diverse cultures like ours. The world is waking up and I think 2020's movements are a testament to this, it's now a case of where not when.

It's the inspirational people who have given me their trust and faith up until now that has inspired me to write this letter to younger Travellers. These people do exist, they are out there. They are the ones that give me hope for the future.

You can check Brinley's work on his website at:

**[www.brinleyclarkdesign.com](http://www.brinleyclarkdesign.com)**

**By Brinley Clarke**









## APPLEBY HORSE FAIR 2019

THE FAIR WAS CANCELLED IN 2020 DUE TO COVID-19. IT IS SET TO GO AHEAD AGAIN LATER THIS SUMMER, COVID -19 RESTRICTIONS PERMITTING.

All photographs by Morgan Fine Art





# ROYAL CROWN DERBY

## LIZ WOLEDGE, DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL CROWN DERBY MUSEUM, TALKS ABOUT THEIR LATEST PROJECT

A year ago, I was at a conference in Darlington where I had the pleasure of meeting Romani storyteller, Richard O'Neill. He told me that many of the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller people he knew collected Royal Crown Derby and we talked about where this tradition might have come from and why. As we talked, I knew I wanted to find out more.

Roll on six months and I was enjoying my job at the museum despite a global pandemic doing its best to ruin things. We were fortunate enough to get support from the Arts Council to collect and more importantly showcase stories from Gypsy, Romani and Traveller collectors of Royal Crown Derby. As we started to collect the stories, I realised that Richard had been one hundred per cent correct; there were some fantastic tales out there, from teething babies soothed by porcelain to a generous shop owner who delighted a young couple.



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MAIN PHOTO: Siobhan Spencer MBE, from the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group, with her Royal Crown Derby © Charles Newland.  
INSET PHOTO: Butterfly paperweight © Royal Crown Derby Museum

These stories are now being made into a brand-new interactive exhibition for the museum so that all our visitors can find out about this important part of the history of Royal Crown Derby alongside the Royal commissions and the stories of the artists who have worked for us over the years.

The stories we have collected so far are just the start, you can submit and share your stories at any time and we will add them to our story archive. We are aiming to reopen our museum and factory tours on 26 July this year. Why not pay us a visit, have a look at everyone's stories on the big screen and maybe even leave us a story of your own?

The winner of our prize draw was Michael, whose story was told by his brother Chris. Their story is about a Royal Crown Derby piece which helped reconnect someone with their family. Michael wins a stunning Solid Gold Band Butterfly paperweight.

Send us your story on WhatsApp **01332 712886**

To see how the interactive and exhibition is shaping up visit this page and give us feedback visit

**[www.royalcrownderbymuseum.com/imari-home](http://www.royalcrownderbymuseum.com/imari-home)**  
**By Liz Woledge**



# 'I DON'T WANT APOLOGIES; I WANT TO SEE CHANGE'

## **CHARMAINE ABDUL KARIM IS SETTING UP A GRT-LED ORGANISATION IN CHESHIRE TO CONTINUE THE WORK OF HER FATHER, THE LATE JOE SMITH.**

We lost our daddy Joe Smith in November, 2019, but someone like my daddy certainly doesn't just fade away, his work ethic and pride in his community and cultural identity will remain always not just with his family but the thousands of people he touched throughout his life.

My dad was a powerhouse, he never backed down, he was proud of who he was and where he came from and both him and my mam always told my sisters and I that it doesn't matter where you get in life, never forget where you come from.

My sisters and I would often come home having been beaten up by big burly gorger boys and his first words would always be I hope you didn't deny what you are (meaning hiding our ethnicity) and then he would go into the school and demand to know why such blatant racism was allowed.

In my 42 years I have suffered and overcome shameless racism and bigotry from my own horrendous experience at school right up to being a mother and having to explain to my children the implication of what being a Romany actually means in this society that has been built on systemic racism.

Many years ago, I was told by my mam and dad that I needed to take my passion and pride in my people and do "something" with that gift from God.

And after what I have seen in the last few months with people being held accountable for their bigotry and racism, I truly see hope for my own community.

I have already seen that shift with influential people from the public sector reaching out and wanting to engage with me, and I want to educate people to understand our history.

The Romany struggle is one of slavery, a holocaust and hangings because of who we were, it's police harassment, it's forced assimilation and right now laws are being passed to make our heritage a criminal offence! But our history is also one of resilience and survival.

What I hope to achieve is to start an organisation and it will be the first of its kind in Cheshire to engage with the wider community and to educate them.

I want to create a network of like-minded people, from all different communities and public sectors, whose aim, like mine, is to create a better life for my community. I want accountability and equality. I don't want apologies; I want to see change.

If you are interested in joining or supporting this new GRT-led organisation then please contact me through the Travellers' Times.

**By Charmaine Abdul Karim**



PHOTO ABOVE: The late Joe Smith  
© Jean Goldsmith

PHOTO BELOW: Charmaine Abdul Karim,  
her mum Josephine Smith and her daughter  
Donna Abdul Karim. © Jean Goldsmith





PHOTO: Olivia Hammond © Luke Collins

**OLIVIA HAMMOND, 21, WHO LIVES IN LANCASHIRE, DIDN'T TAKE THE TRADITIONAL ROUTE THROUGH EDUCATION. IN CONVERSATION WITH OUR YTT EDITOR LISA SMITH, SHE SHARES HER JOURNEY THROUGH EDUCATION, THE BARRIERS SHE FACED, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM TO BECOME A FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR.**

I went to primary school as a child, but never went to secondary school ... says Olivia Hammond. I always wanted to get back into education though, as I'm an avid learner, and I began to teach myself Brazilian Portuguese as well as general secondary school subjects to quench that thirst for knowledge. When I was 15, after a five-year

break in education, I attended Lancaster & Morecambe College within a programme for Not in Education, Employment or Training learners, which quickly progressed into my GCSEs, an administration traineeship, and a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Business Studies, which I studied for two years and received the highest grade possible; a triple distinction star.

I have always loved learning and have enjoyed my experiences. They've not always been easy, from casual prejudice against where I come from to the pressure I put on myself to perform well once given the opportunity, but it's the best decision I've ever made and has opened so many doors! I now work full time at Lancaster & Morecambe College within the Marketing & Engagement Department.

I experienced many barriers, but I feel strongly that the majority of these were the limitations I placed on myself, but with my belief that I could succeed and seeking out strong female role models helped me overcome these. There is also

a lack of education on our culture within most educational institutions, and I feel that this needs to change. I invite any nurseries, schools, colleges, universities, extracurricular clubs, etc. to contact me to discuss both the small and large changes that can be made to help with enrolling and retaining Travellers.

My advice for other Traveller girls is that first they laugh, and then they ask how you did it! No one knows better than you, the course that you want your life to take. No matter what anyone tells you if what you want isn't the traditional route, it is not wrong or strange to consider other opportunities! Neither is it wrong to go down the traditional route, as long as you are informed and content in your choice. You will never be as happy as you are when you're living your truth.

**Interview by Lisa Smith**

If you are an education professional that requires some consultancy or another Traveller who would like some advice, contact Olivia at [olivia.j.hammond@outlook.com](mailto:olivia.j.hammond@outlook.com)





## COVER STORY: 'HOPE' BY ELIJAH VARD0

### "WITH MY ART, I WANT TO SHOW THE BEAUTY OF OUR CULTURE"

Elijah Parker, widely known and respected online as Elijah Vardo, is a twenty-four-year-old Romani artist, illustrator and graphic designer from Cambridge.

Growing up in England during the 2000s–2010s, you would assume that the media would be progressive enough to be more inclusive to all ethnic minorities and races, writes Elijah Parker.

But I constantly found myself despising my very own heritage, solely because of how the media portrayed us. Not only does this taint non-Travellers' views about us but can also force you to think negatively about yourself, opening up a whole load of issues for young people.

As a Romani Gypsy child, I could never look at a book, TV show, or anything – and say, "I am represented". With my art, I hope to show people how beautiful our culture is, but most importantly, give the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children the representation that they deserve.

I have loved art and being creative my entire life. But never felt the need to draw my own culture, but more so was drawn to anime, or fantasy art. A few years ago, I was living abroad, going through a depressive episode – I felt disconnected from myself and my creative practice. I was lost in my own darkness.

Insomnia became a blessing in disguise. After a restless night, 9:00am came along – I found myself critically analysing my life (once again) but this time I was missing home, missing my family, missing my culture.

I missed my 8-year-old niece that I hadn't seen in what felt like years. Thinking about her, and the pain she would feel growing up in the world that I grew up in... With no positive representation, how can Gypsy children truly thrive and reach their full potential in such a world?

I thought maybe I can help influence a change. I began to sketch ideas for a book where a young Gypsy girl is the main character. Embracing who she is, and where she is from. It's this that reignited my passion for art, with the hope to create what I wish I had growing up.

With my art, I hope to show the beauty of our culture. Using the vibrant colour, patterns and the abundance of gold, as the main source of inspiration for my work. I am especially inspired by crown derby; how it's so simple, yet beautifully detailed.

You can buy Elijah's Crown Derby inspired pin design here: [www.etsy.com/uk/shop/ElijahVardo](https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/ElijahVardo) and follow him to see more of his work here: [htlinktr.ee/elijahvardo](https://htlinktr.ee/elijahvardo)



PHOTO LEFT: Royal Crown Derby-inspired pin design by Elijah Vardo  
PHOTO RIGHT: Elijah's ancestor Margaret (Peg Leg) Parker



# A POSITIVE TV PORTRAYAL OF ROMANY GYPSIES AT LAST?

PHOTO: Ryan Dean as Johnny Cooper in Ackley Bridge © Channel 4



## A BIG THUMBS UP FOR CHANNEL 4'S CHILDREN'S DRAMA SERIES ACKLEY BRIDGE FROM YTT REPORTER RUBY-LEIGH SMITH

It's been just over a year since Channel 4 aired *Dispatches: The Truth About Traveller Crime*, and they are already jumping into the deep end by introducing a Romany Gypsy as a main character in their children's drama set in a Yorkshire secondary school, *Ackley Bridge*.

As soon as I realised that *Ackley Bridge* was going to have a new Romany Gypsy character as a pupil, I was apprehensive. I had no doubt that they would make another whopping fail at showing the good side to a community which is portrayed negatively in almost every show made about them.

But within the first ten minutes of episode one, I was proved wrong.

Johnny Cooper and his family are first seen pulling into the grounds of Ackley Bridge College, where Johnny is enrolled as a pupil.

In the fourth series, new character Johnny also struggles with juggling his responsibilities at home and to his family with the life that he has outside of that; at school, with his non-Gypsy 'Gorja' friends, and to music, which appears to be a passion of his.

Moreover, at one point in the season there was a Romany Gypsy funeral which I thought had been both filmed and acted out very respectfully and in line with the rituals and practices of the culture of Romany Gypsies.

*Ackley Bridge* was originally about two schools merging; one school had been exclusively for the Pakistani children, and the other for the non-Pakistanis. The first three series were brilliant, and showed the difficulties of children from different backgrounds coming together in order to form a cohesive learning environment, as well as showing that racist views can be overcome with some education. Additionally, there was a lot of family and friendship drama, which helped to keep things interesting! The same is true for series four.

In *Ackley Bridge*, Channel 4, I feel, have given as accurate and unbiased a portrayal of the life of Romany Gypsies as they can, and have done their best to honour our traditions as in the case of the funeral, and have tried to correct some prejudices and stereotypes which exist towards us in society.

**By Ruby-Leigh Smith**

Ten-part drama *Ackley Bridge* is available for free on All 4.

Read the full version of this article on the TT website and an online exclusive – Ruby's interview with Ryan Dean, the actor who plays Johnny Cooper and George Ormond, Executive Producer at *Ackley Bridge* production company The Forge. Ruby quizzes George Ormond on why they didn't use a young Romany Gypsy actor to play Johnny's character. The production company reached out to try to find one, he tells Ruby, but this time they were unsuccessful – let's hope they are more successful in the future.



# OBITUARIES

PHOTO: Ryalla Duffy



## **RYALLA DUFFY** **11.04.1959 – 10.03.2021**

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the sudden passing of Aynlee Ryalla Duffy, writes Siobhan Spencer.

Born into wagon time in the 1950s Ryalla once stated:

"The period since then has seen a gradual, intentional and unrelenting erosion of rights of an entire way of life, aided and abetted by legislation and media bias."

How true that statement is in the present climate. Ryalla and her family went through endless enforcements themselves from 1987 in Sussex when they had to leave their own land, she was well known in the southern counties (as well as the Midlands).

Ryalla was an excellent representative for her people and Romany rights, she was very knowledgeable of the New Forest families and she wrote a chapter on this history of the "compounds" in the Patrin book as part of the Patrin project.

Ryalla worked hard in Lincolnshire and was responsible for getting the much-needed work undertaken on the Summergangs Lane site, in Gainsborough. She was also the author of several books and heritage DVDs; she was the subject of the classic Anglo Romani book 'Born on the Straw' by Dorothy Strange (1968.) Ryalla had lived the life, lit many fires and told many stories.

In 2005 Ryalla was one of the founder members of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and took part in police training, parliamentary meetings and conferences.

One of the last days we spent together was with Lord Bourne, laying a wreath on the grave of John Cunningham VC in commemoration of the centenary of the Great War, a great day with her that as usual ended with great laughter.

Recently I obtained a certificate of lawful use for Ryalla for land she had been resorting to for many, many years, this was her time now to relax and enjoy time with her family.

Bereaved are her four daughters, two sons and all of 13 grandchildren. She is now in heaven to rest in peace with little Levi. The community will miss her hugely and I shall miss a very dear old friend.

**By Siobhan Spencer**



PHOTO: Dennis Latham

## **DENNIS LATHAM** **11.08.1945 – 19.03.2021**

We were all very sorry to hear about the passing of Dennis Latham from Walsall. Dennis had undertaken a lot of work with National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups for Gypsies and Travellers and before that with the Walsall Gypsy and Traveller Forum. Dennis was paramount in improving health outcomes and worked with both the Red Cross and the NHS producing a Traveller handheld record card. From early times Dennis would fight the corner of all Travellers, whether that be for Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Showmen, he knew them all and especially in and around Birmingham.

Dennis knew the history of the Black Patch and his endless stories would have everyone in stitches, he was a painter of great renown, from wagons and hand carts to grinding barrows, he was an artist of tremendous skill a skill that he would share, always willing to help others. He made working in prisons one of his priorities encouraging budding artists, whether painters or poets to give people another chance.

Dennis was impassioned and worked totally from the heart, it was a pleasure to know and work with him on a number of levels. Our condolences are with Pauline and the family, he will be missed by many, many people.

**By Siobhan Spencer**

# HELPLINES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

## TRAVELLING AHEAD

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

**0808 802 0025**

**travellingahead@tgpcymru.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**

## FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS

Working on behalf of all Gypsies, Roma and Travellers regardless of ethnicity, culture or background.

**01273 234777 | [fft@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto: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 | [www.leedsgate.co.uk](http://www.leedsgate.co.uk)**

## ROMA SUPPORT GROUP

Supporting and empowering the Roma community. Contact us on

**0794 908 9778**

**info@romasupportgroup.org.uk**

**www.romasupportgroup.org.uk**

## ONE CALL AWAY

Gypsy & Traveller Mental Health and Support.

**077489 97617**

## LGBT TRAVELLER PRIDE ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ + GYPSIES, ROMA & TRAVELLERS

**07395 355 066**

**www.lgbttravellerpride.com**

## TRAVELLERS ADVICE TEAM

Legal advice and support for Gypsies and Travellers facing eviction.

**0121 685 8677**

**www.communitylawpartnership.co.uk**

## SAMARITANS

**116 123 | [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)**

## CHILD LINE

**0800 1111 | [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

## NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE

**0808 2000 247**

**www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk**

## WOMEN'S AID (DOMESTIC ABUSE)

**www.womensaid.org.uk**

## MIND

For better mental health.

**0300 123 3393 | [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)**

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**0800 9177 650**

**www.alcoholics-anonymous.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**