

Travellers in prison news

Newsletter of the
Traveller Equality
Project

Issue 11
June 2014



Appelby Fair (Rumney2012)

So spread the word and enjoy Traveller History Month. AND remember to let us know what's happening in your prison this June.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. TIPN is your newsletter so, please send us your poems, letters, stories and pictures for the next issue.

Contributions can be sent to:
**Traveller Equality Project,
Irish Chaplaincy in Britain,
50-52 Camden Square,
London, NW1 9XB**

Prison and Probation staff can also download resources from our website here:

bit.ly/XCUhAc

Or email us:

travellers@irishchaplancy.org.uk

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Celebrate Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month

Welcome to the Traveller History Month edition of TIPN. History Month is a great opportunity to raise awareness of Traveller culture. Here at the Traveller Equality Project we have been swamped with requests, ideas and events to attend in prisons across the country. These invitations have come from both prison staff as well as Traveller reps.

Make sure that your prison celebrates Traveller culture in your prison. Ask the diversity or equality team for more information or contact us at the Traveller Equality Project. Anything that you can do to celebrate Traveller culture and explain the Travelling way of life is sure to make understanding one another a lot easier!

The work of the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain is funded in part by grants from the Government of Ireland, the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, and the support of many generous friends.

BARROW CADBURY
TRUST

Letter of the Month from John in Wormwood Scrubs

Education - the only way forward.

A Travelling man is no more a myth than any other man. Most men in prison assume that Travellers are all boxers, rich and smart - in that order! We are not!!!

All men are capable of good and bad. There is a difference between having fight in you and being a boxer. Travellers as a whole are seen as tough, confident and a proud if secretive people. We want people to hear and see us, but never know us.

I believe that normal boys can learn to be truly great men by example of the average man. There is an old saying - no man is my enemy, no man is my friend, every man is my teacher. We can learn our best or worst traits at home.

Travellers from childhood are taught that the greatest success is to be the richest or toughest. Most never succeed. For the greatest success is being a good and loving father and faithful gentle husband. It requires the greatest handwork.

But to forever be your son's "superman", what could be more rewarding than that? To know that your wife loves you all the more for it.

I know that education, no matter what your age is the greatest gift you will ever

give yourself, and with no real financial cost.

This world is changing and if we are to survive, let alone succeed then we need to smarten up.

It's good to be healthy, so exercise the mind. As children at school we're taught to believe that you can be anything possible, if you grasp it. But then at 10-12 years old we are taken out of school to be a useful member of the family. When we do this, we do our children a great disservice, and limit their dream to just being a man.

During a very lengthy prison sentence I've been lucky - **through reading I've been a pirate and a prince. I've travelled the world and space, I've been wealthy beyond dreams and I've been the lowliest pauper. And I've enjoyed every second of it.**

Whenever I now think of success I think of being all I can be. Why reach for the sky, when there are footprints on the moon.

Education, learning to read and write can seem a daunting and lengthy experience. But if we are the tough and proud people we claim to be then it's another road we can travel.



Not all Travellers are going to be extremely wealthy or truly exceptional fighters. **But education is a fight we can win and it's priceless.**

Some will find it harder to achieve than others but that's what makes us individuals. For me, there is only one gift greater than education and that's being able to teach someone else. You owe it to yourself to be all you can be for then you'll be a person worth knowing.

**John,
Wormwood Scrubs**


ShannonTrust

**Become a mentor or learner
today!**

If someone you know would like to be able to read or you would like to help others read ask staff for the details of the Shannon Trust Reading Plan (AKA Toe by Toe).



Appleby Fair (Rumney2012)

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month

There's a saying: **'If you don't know where you're from, you'll never know where you're going.'**

Traveller History Month or to give its full name Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month is about knowing where you are from and where you are going.

History strangely is mostly about the future. Traveller History Month is about the future. It is about being aware of all that happened in the lives of Travellers so that we can appreciate and celebrate Traveller life BUT ALSO, so that we can learn from it for our future.

During Black History Month every October, regardless of your background when we learn about

great black leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, we all learn useful lessons about how to live, how to behave, and how to overcome challenges.

Traveller History Month is a similar opportunity. Instead of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture being reduced to cheap television shows with bigger and bigger dresses – Traveller History Month is a chance to show the great richness of Traveller culture.

Traveller History Month started in Brent in June 2001. And it has been celebrated every June since. In 2007, it gained government approval when the minister Lord Adonis announced:

'I have endorsed a national Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month in June ... This will offer us all the chance to raise awareness and explore the history, culture and language of these communities

... We can challenge myths, tackle prejudice and be in a position to offer a balanced debate about the issues. We will be able to celebrate the richness that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities bring to our everyday lives through their many varied academic and artistic achievements'.

And there's a lot to be proud of. In the past few years, we have met numerous successful Travellers: a barrister, a doctor, a psychologist, musicians, craftsmen, business people, prison staff, police officers and so on and so on.

BUT in prison, we've met even greater role models, men and women from Travelling backgrounds who have pulled themselves together, got an education, set up Traveller Groups, become Traveller Reps, put themselves forward as Toe by Toe (Shannon Trust Reading) mentors or become listeners. Each of these Traveller role models in prison have shown the best of Traveller culture: **loyalty, trust and determination.**

When we visit Traveller Groups in prisons across England and Wales, we see Traveller men and women who are deeply proud of their history be they from a Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller background. So if you are a Traveller in prison make sure you tell your fellow prisoners from whatever background, a little about the truth of Travellers this Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month. And then perhaps we will understand one another a little more.

The Fair Life

Travelling from town to town
Building up and pulling down
Trailers home without a doubt
All mod cons and sides that pull out
—
Uprights, shutter, rafters to store
Lights, cables and swag galore.
Waltzer cars spinning around
To the latest disco sounds
—
The carousel goes round and round
Galloping horses go up and down
Down the helter skelter we go
Round and round to the ground below
—
See the fair from the air
From the wheel if you dare
Freak out, bomber and atmosphere
To the sky they swing and soar.
Sizzler twists sends us in a spin
Cars weaving circuits in and out within
Roller coasters go up and down
Painted cars go spinning around.
—
Throw a ring over the block
Must lie flat to win a clock
Hook a duck from our hoopla
Pick a prize, one win that's all.

Brandy snaps, toffee apples and more
Hot peas, candy floss and sweets galore
Looking forward to the winter rest
Equipment to paint and annual test
—
Time for us to take a break
A long awaited holiday to take.

By Danny



Nevin on Road to Recovery

LONDON 2012 Olympic silver medallist John Joe Nevin will have his second pro fight before Christmas, according to his coach Brian McKeown.

Nevin took his first tentative steps back into the ring at the Cavan boxing club yesterday following an incident in Mullingar seven weeks ago which left him with two broken legs.

Nevin turned pro last year and claimed his first victory in the paid ranks at the House of Blues in Boston on St Patrick's Day.

The former AIBA world No 1-ranked bantamweight beat durable Puerto Rican puncher Albert Candelaria on a unanimous decision in New England.

His career has been put on hold since the incident but McKeown, who was working his corner against Candelaria, is confident he'll be back between the ropes again in 2014.

"The mobility is limited at this stage, so we're working on upper-body strength, flexibility and reflexes," said McKeown.

"We hoping that in 10 or 12 days he gets the all-clear and is off the sticks (crutches). I would be confident that he'll be back boxing before the end of the year.

"He needs the fights and there's no time to waste. Realistically, I'm looking for a fight for November or December. I would love if that fight was in Ireland.

"But it will probably be in the USA. Next year we'll be looking to step up to eight-rounders. John did very well over six rounds on his debut against the Puerto Rican lad."

Official Recognition for Travellers in Ireland

Travellers are not recognised as a distinct ethnic group in the Republic of Ireland, despite decades of calls for recognition.

However, after a long hard push, it seems only a matter of time before the Irish Government gives official recognition to Travellers. In a report published in April, the parliamentary *Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality* concludes it is "unsustainable" for the State to reject the ethnicity of Travellers.

When Things Were Hard by TJ

I was seven years of age in 1952 when things were hard.

Mam and Dad were shouting at each other saying how now are we going to feed the kids. So I went to the duck pond in the park.

I managed to catch duck and whilst I was sitting there were feathers everywhere all over me, this loud voice behind me shouted out to me, 'What on earth are you doing?'

It was only the Park Keeper holding his bike. So I quickly ushered the baldy duck back into the pond, and I turned around to face the angry Park Keeper and I said 'I'm sorry sir, but I'm just looking after its clothes whilst it goes for a swim'.

Alone

by a Traveller from Cork

As I sit here in my prison cell
When I think of you it hurts like hell
I toss and turn all through the night
thinking: will things ever go right?

To be straight up: crime does not pay
When you love someone and you're
locked away
It's like a knife piercing through my
heart
I hope my love pain stops before the
tears start.

**Remember to register
today in your prison as:
'W3 – Gypsy /
Irish Traveller'**



Appleby Fair (Rumney2012)

One in 20 prisoners in England and Wales are Travellers

A report published recently by the Prison Inspectorate discovered that 5%, or 1 in 20 prisoners in England and Wales are from Gypsy / Traveller background.

'Even on the lowest estimates ... prisoners of Gypsy, Romany and Traveller backgrounds are significantly overrepresented in the prison population. Our survey findings suggest that the proportion might be as high as 5% (the same proportion as women prisoners) and much higher than this in some establishments, particularly those holding children. The reasons for this overrepresentation lie outside the prison service and more needs to be done to understand and address this.'

The high numbers of children and young people describing themselves as Gypsy, Romany or Traveller in STCs, which hold some of the most vulnerable and challenging young people in custody, is worthy of further exploration.'

The Prison Inspectorate report goes on to recommend that:

'There should be comprehensive monitoring of the numbers of prisoners of Gypsy, Romany and Traveller background and further research undertaken to understand the reasons for their apparent overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, their needs in prison and how they can best be supported to resettle successfully and reduce the risk they will reoffend.'

For these reasons – to help yourself and to help other Travellers – it is important that you register in prison as W3 Irish Traveller /Gypsy.

If you are not counted – then you won't count!



By Sean, Wormwood Scrubs

STRUGGLE

It hurts to watch you struggle,
Trying so hard to win,
But trade your precious birthright,
For candy coated sin,
Wasting priceless moment,
Restless and confused,
Building up defences,
For fear that, you'll be used,
If you're tired and weary,
Weak and heavy ladened,
I can understand,
How it feels to be alone,
Take my yoke upon you,
Walk here by my side,
Let me heal your heartache,
Dry the tears you've cried,
And I will take your burden,
If you let me love you,
I'll wrap my arms around you,
And give your heart a home.

Signed

Jesus

Sent in by Michael M

MARK

Mark, I wrote this just to say:

me and your two beautiful boys will think about you every day

Our time apart will only get longer
but our love for you will only get stronger

We had some good times and some bad
but times with you were the best we ever had

When we were together you'd always make us smile

From now on I promise you
I will think about the things we used to do

I promise you you'll always be
in my heart

Because you were the one
who meant the world to me.

By a Traveller



Billy Joe Saunders Ready for European Title Rumble

British and Commonwealth Champion Billy Joe Saunders is again looking to add to the reputation of Traveller boxers, as he aims to become European champion. Billy Joe knows that a win against Italy's Emanuele Blandamura on July 26 in Manchester will earn him the vacant European middleweight crown and a shot at the world title.

Fighting on the undercard of the Tyson Fury – Dereck Chisora fight, Billy Joe can expect an amazing following from the Gypsy and Traveller community as they look to help their boys onto glory.

The unbeaten 24 year old Billy Joe says he won't let his Italian opponent get in the way of his dreams, as he looks to add the European title to his British and Commonwealth belts. With his long term goal being a World Title.



'Travellers in the Irish Prison System' Report Launched in Dublin

Above: Pavee Point co-director Martin Collins, Liza Costello and Deirdre Malone of the Irish Penal Reform Trust at the launch of a report on Travellers in the Irish prison system which recommends many of the initiatives occurring in UK prisons such as Traveller Groups and Traveller cultural awareness training.

Gypsy Roma Traveller Month

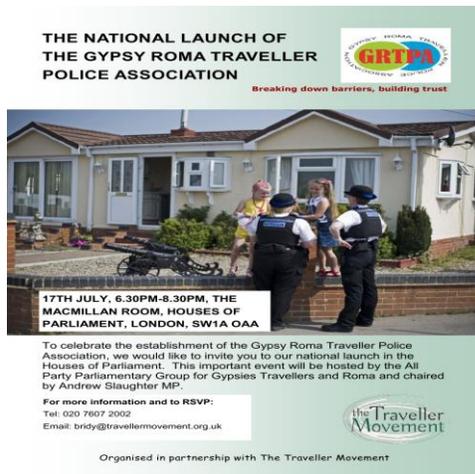
Across Britain

Outside of prisons the launch of the Gypsy Traveller Roma History Month in the Victoria & Albert Museum on June 1st highlights the national importance being given to this occasion. A range of different activities taking place will include poetry reading, dancing, music and a cultural exhibitions.

This is certainly the kind of educational experience that can help inform those less familiar with Traveller and Gypsy culture. And this is only one of many events taking place across Britain.

Borough Gardens in Dorset will host an event that includes the opportunity to get up close to some traditional Gypsy Caravans and try out some traditional Gypsy skills such as willow weaving and flower making. On top of that there will live music and a photograph display. Brighton will host performance art as well as a photographic exhibition. Whilst Hackney Borough Council aims to continue their fantastic yearly contribution to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM) with various events.

So Traveller History Month is continuing to get bigger and bigger!



Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association Formally Launched

The Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association (GRTPA) will have their national launch in the Houses of Parliament on 17th July 2014

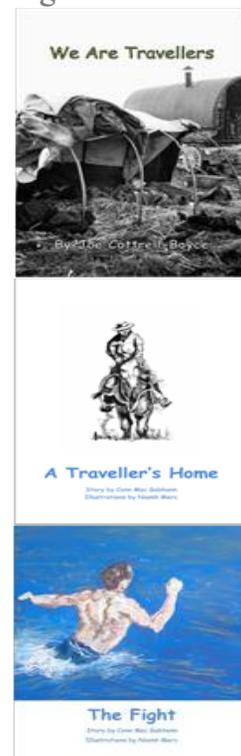
The GRTPA is the first organisation of its kind in the UK. Started in September 2013 by an English Romani Officer from Thames Valley Police, Jim Davies and a Czech Roma Officer from Cambridgeshire, Petr Torak. Since 2013 the association has grown quickly and now has over 50 members from the UK and several members from Europe.

The main focus of the association is to act as a support network for those officers and police staff who are Gypsy, Roma or Traveller. It aims to promote equality and fairness and provide a support forum where members can share, discuss and help to resolve issues that effect their working life.

However, linked to this aim is the desire to foster good relationships between the Police and GRT Communities. By facilitating co-operation between Police, and the GRT communities, we hope to establish a platform for sharing good practice, help break down barriers and build trust on all sides.

Traveller Equality Project Resources

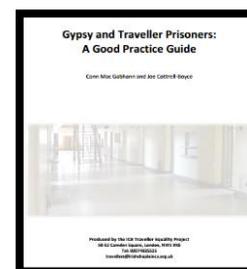
Reading Books:



Posters / Postcards:



Information:



Tyson Fury sees Family as Big Influence

Tyson Fury goes into his world title eliminator on the 26th July as a man proud of his roots.

Tyson sees his background and particularly his father, John as major influences on his boxing career. Fury claims this has given him a grit and determination that has helped him succeed in the ring so far.

His summer fight with Dereck Chisora, a man he has defeated already on points in 2011 could see Fury get a crack at Vladimir Klitschko's WBO belt.

The tough talking, hard hitting Fury is a man on a mission, determined to extend his unbeaten professional record to 23 wins and no losses.

Fury has seen a lot of recent disappointments professionally after a high profile fight with David Haye fell through due to Haye's injury in 2013.

However Fury will be hoping that the Manchester summer sun, together with an expected vocal crowd can ease that disappointment with victory over Chisora. This will once again prove that dedication to his sport can bring success.

Fury said recently,

'If I'm a fraud, I want to be found out.

If I'm a fraud I hope somebody does find me out because I won't waste my time anymore.

So if I'm a fraud please come and find me out. And if anyone in the top 10 of boxing thinks that I'm a fraud come and prove it.

Whether anyone can do that remains to be seen, but I've got all the ambitions of retiring undefeated, so let's see if somebody can come and deal with me.'

On the night of 26th July we will get a better idea of where Tyson Fury stands in terms of world class fighters.

STAY IN TOUCH!

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter and will sign up for future editions.

Do you have a question about Travellers in prison?

Are you thinking of starting a Travellers Group and would like advice?

Are you looking for resources for Traveller prisoners?

Then please get in touch!

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