

Travellers in prison news

Newsletter of the
Traveller Equality
Project

Issue 15
June 2015



GYPSY ROMA TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of TIPN celebrating Traveller History Month

It's been a momentous month for the Travelling community, following a legal victory on the 18th May when one of the largest pub chains in Britain was deemed to have unlawfully refused entry to delegates who had been at a conference with the Traveller Movement.

This judgement shows the discrimination and racism towards Travellers and Gypsies is now considered unacceptable by the judiciary.

We are also delighted to be celebrating Traveller History Month this June. There are lots of events taking place in both prisons around the country and the outside community to celebrate the rich culture and history of Travellers and Gypsies. It is a time especially in prisons when others can learn about the unique culture of Travellers and Gypsies.

What are you doing to celebrate in your prison? Write to tell us about your celebrations and events.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and please let us know what's happening in your prison. We are especially keen to hear of any education events or initiatives for Travellers

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, 50 Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB

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

bit.ly/XCUhAc

Or email us:

travellers@irishchaplaincy.org.uk

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.

ShannonTrust



TRAVELLERS

Become a learner or a mentor 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.**

A Short History of Travellers and Gypsies

The first record of Gypsies in Britain is from 1505; the name 'Gypsy' comes from the mistaken belief that the nomadic group had come from Egypt.

In fact, Romani Gypsies originally came from Northern India, and travelled through the Middle East and Europe for centuries before arriving in Britain.

It is difficult to identify the exact origins of Irish Travellers. Some may be the descendants of those dispossessed at the hands of British colonial rule in the seventeenth century, but there is evidence which points to the existence of nomadic groups in Ireland with a distinct and separate culture as early as the fifth century AD. Travellers were particularly respected in Ireland as master musicians and skilled craftsmen. The first records of Travellers in Britain are from the 1800s.

Gypsies and Irish Travellers have played an important role in this country's past. They were an essential part of the rural economy, were soldiers in wartime and contributed to cultural and artistic life as sportsmen, artists, actors and musicians. Now it's up to us to ensure that Travellers continue to play a leading role in Britain today.

Want To Support Your Traveller Community?

*** REGISTER AS 'W3 – Gypsy / Irish Traveller'**

Become a Shannon Trust Mentor or Learner
Become a Traveller Rep
Organise a Traveller Group
Become a Listener

EDUCATE / ORGANISE / EMPOWER

Appleby Horse Fair



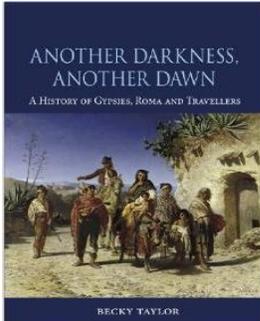
The Appleby Horse Fair in Cumbria is held each year in early June when 10,000 - 15,000 English and Welsh Gypsies, Scottish Travellers and Irish Travellers gather to buy and sell horses, meet with friends and relations, and celebrate their culture. These different ethnic groups share a similar lifestyle and culture, and many Gypsies and Travellers regard Appleby Fair as the most important date in the calendar, and it remains one of the largest of their gatherings. An estimated 25-30,000 non-Traveller people visit the fair during the week.

The fair is held outside the town of Appleby where the Roman Road crosses Long Marton Road, not far from Gallows Hill (named after the public hangings that were once carried out there.)

The fair customarily takes place in the first week of June, from the first Thursday to the following Wednesday. The main day is Saturday, and it is mostly all over by Monday. Besides the horses, there are fortune tellers, palm readers, music stalls, clothing stalls, tools and hardware, china, stainless steel, and horse-related merchandise including harness and carriages.

Book Review:

Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers



In this brilliant book, Becky Taylor follows Romany people from their roots in the East to show how they became established in the West and beyond. She also looks at Europe's other ethnic Travellers, and weaves a gripping story of their part in the continent's history.

What sets Taylor's work apart is that wherever possible, she names the individual Gypsy and Traveller people in history, and quotes them whenever she can. In August 1736, John Boswell and his family were evicted from Ailsbury. In the 1960s, Irish Traveller Jimmy Connors tells of how he once had to produce his insurance and driving licence 28 times in a single day.

Much of this book comes from the mouths of the people themselves, rather than just being another historian's view. It's essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the history behind how Gypsies and Travellers live today.

Celebrating Traveller Achievement



The Traveller Movement has launched a new poster as part of its recent *Operation Traveller Vote* campaign to get Travellers to participate in politics. The poster celebrates a few of the many successful Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in society including a writer, a boxer, a teacher, a politician, a lawyer and a police officer.

Patrick O'Donnell, (who is included in the poster) an Irish Traveller who has run his own demolition and groundworks company for the last ten years says he knows many Gypsies and Travellers who run their own small businesses but who hide their ethnicity for fear of discrimination. He says that politics is the best way for his community to "get their voice heard".

The Traveller Movement can be contacted at The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London, N7 6PA.

In Praise of Learning

Learn the elementary things!
For those whose time has come
It is never too late!
Learn the ABC. It won't be enough,
But learn it! Don't be dismayed by
it?
Begin! You must know everything.
You must take over the leadership.

Learn, man in the asylum!
Learn, man in the prison!
Learn, woman in the kitchen!
Learn sixty year olds!
You must take over the leadership.
Seek out the school, you who are
homeless!
Acquire knowledge, you who shiver!
You who are hungry, reach for the
book:
it is a weapon.
You must take over the leadership.

Don't be afraid to ask, comrade!
Don't be talked into anything.
Check for yourself!
What you do not know yourself
you don't know.
Scrutinize the bill,
it is you who must pay it.
Put your finger on each item,
ask: how did this get there ?
You must take over the leadership.

(A thoughtful poem about the importance of education by Bertolt Brecht)



Walking Down the Street

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the path.
I fall in.
I am lost... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the path.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But, it isn't my fault.
It still takes me a long time to get out.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the path.
I see it is there.
I still fall in. It's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault. I get out immediately.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the path.
I walk around it.

I walk down another street.

Finola

Left Behind but Not Forgotten

Just over a year ago I was moved to another prison! I was expecting to move to start a course, but I never expected to move so soon.

So you say goodbye to good friends close by, and before you know you are on your way.

On the way you feel on edge and wonder what lies ahead. I wondered if I would meet my own kind, Travellers and Gypsies, who I can feel comfortable with. You begin to feel the sadness of the company left behind.

They were a good bunch of old and new and we welcomed anyone that joined us too. That's what Travellers do we support our own and welcome the country people too.

Inside you think your gone and forgotten but no you find your friends and Travellers alike, the friendship and bond is made second to none.

So to Travellers and Gypsies reading this, don't feel left behind or forgotten. Be there for each other. Attend your forums and say hello. And to those left behind, you are not forgotten.

Terry



My Love

You are the only one in my heart
To stay at all times even though we are apart.

All times you are there for me and the children.

Your love is everywhere when I am near you,

My Love, your love to me is all I have in my heart.

True love don't come easy
so you can understand the wounds of my broken heart
because you are the one and only true love to me.

True love is not a toy, it is to understand one another at all times
So you can understand, you are the only one I do love.

Jimmy



Above: One of the many Traveller History Month events held last year in prison.

Traveller Conference Delegates Win Damages from Pub Chain

A body representing Travellers has claimed a legal victory after a Wetherspoon pub refused entry to delegates at its annual conference.

The incident happened at the Coronet on Holloway Road, north London, in November 2011 and involved the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain – now known as the Traveller Movement.

Lawyers representing the delegates, complained to the Central London County Court that a group of 15 people were denied entry for racist reasons. The group included Travellers, a police inspector, a barrister and a priest.

The pub's owner, JD Wetherspoon, denied allegations of discrimination. But on Monday Judge Hand QC ruled there had been direct discrimination and awarded damages to several individuals. Tim Martin, chairman of Wetherspoon, said: "Wetherspoon apologises to the eight individuals who were denied entry and for any upset and distress this caused to them.

It is the first time that a claim of this nature has been brought against the company in the 35 years of its existence.

"In the light of the judgment, though we have always been fully committed to operating our premises in a non-discriminatory way, we will undertake a full review of our relevant policies, procedures and training."

Martin Howe, a solicitor with Howe & Co who acted for the Travellers, said: "This judgment will shake to the core all those who engage in racist conduct towards Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies. The last bastion of 'acceptable racism' has come crashing down."



Above: Dr Conn Mac Gabhann, Manager of the Traveller Equality Project was one of the successful claimants in the case against pub chain, Wetherspoons.

Conn Mac Gabhann of the Traveller Equality Project, stated that "the case shows that the law is there to protect Gypsies and Travellers as well as other members of society. It is a strong statement from the judiciary that Travellers and Gypsies are equal members of society and must be treated as equals."

International Roma Day



International Roma Day was celebrated across Britain on 8th April 2015. The day was first declared an event in 1990. European Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) were targeted for extermination under the Nazi regime and up to half a million were killed in concentration camps between 1939 and 1945.

The day is seen as an opportunity to celebrate Romani culture and raise awareness of the issues facing Roma people. International Roma Day also draws attention to discrimination directed at Roma and Gypsy communities globally and is a call for the human rights of all to be respected and observed.



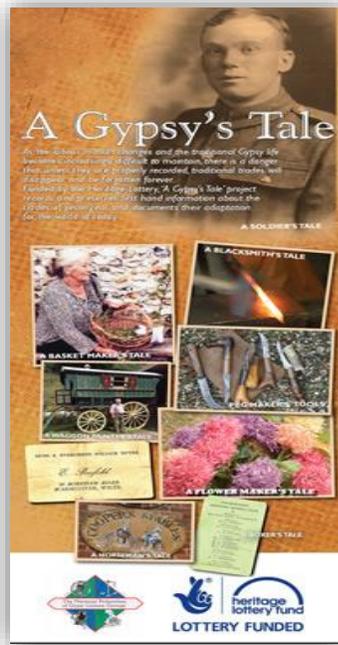
Above: Celebrations in Glasgow for International Roma Day.

DVD Launch:

A Gypsy's Tale: The Culture and Heritage of Britain's Romany Gypsies

"I've done it for them people who are all dead and gone because if it wasn't for them, these wagons wouldn't be here" says Gordon Boswell. Gordon was recorded at his Romany Museum in Lincolnshire for a new DVD called *A Gypsy's Tale: The Culture and Heritage of Britain's Romany Gypsies*.

A Gypsy's Tale contains 12 short films telling the story of traditional Gypsy lives from blacksmithing to boxing, wreath-making to wagon-painting, alongside more recent work such as poetry and civil rights advocacy.



Tom McCready, a Romany Gypsy and the Heritage Officer of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups (the organisation that produced the DVD) said:

"For Gypsies everywhere, work and tradition are important issues. They walk a fine line between new skills and trying to preserve old ones."

As we commemorate the 100 anniversary of the First World War, the DVD tells the stories of Gypsy men like John Cunningham who won the Victoria Cross at the Battle of the Somme.

The DVD is a remarkable telling of Gypsy lives, told by Gypsies themselves

**Sheila Stewart MBE
1935-2014**

Shelia Stewart MBE, who died on 9th December 2014 aged 79, was a Scottish Traveller, one of the famous 'Stewarts of Blair' and renowned singer, author and storyteller.

Born in a stable in Perthshire in 1935, she rose to become one of the most recognisable figures of Scottish cultural life. Stewart wrote several books including *The Life of Belle Stewart* about her mother, who was known as "The Queen among the Heather".

Her uncle, Donald Stewart, was a major influence on her singing: she recalled how if she didn't sing the way he wanted, he would clap his hands and say "shut up! You're not ready for it. We'll try you with that in a few months' time."

In 1982, five years after the death of her husband, Ian MacGregor, Sheila sang the 'Moving on Song' in front of Pope John Paull II and more than 300,000 onlookers at Glasgow's Bellahouston Park.

She lectured at Princeton and Harvard Universities, performed at the Smithsonian Institute and worked with many other famed musicians including Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger.

Shelia Stewart was a long-term defender of Traveller rights and sat on the Secretary of State for Scotland's advisory committee on Travellers. She is survived by her children, Ian, Hamish, Heather, Gregor, as well as 13 grandchildren.



Have Your Say On Education and Training in Prison



We've all heard a Traveller say 'I don't need education' or 'Education is not for me' or 'Education is not a Traveller thing'. Well, thankfully we in the Traveller Equality Project, don't hear these things said much anymore when we go into prisons around the country.

The truth is Travellers have always been interested in education and training, how is it that Travellers have been skilled craftsmen and master musicians and more recently, business people, teachers, lawyers and doctors? Travellers may not always have done formal education but the making of a vardo, the learning of the uilleann pipes or the building of a home takes years of training and dedication. Travellers do education now as they always have and in fact Traveller prisoners are even teaching other Travellers and non-Travellers to read in prison.

Education, say for a HGV or forklift licence, CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) Card or reading and writing are essential for Travellers to get on in the world.

So the Traveller Equality Project wants to hear about your experiences of education as a Traveller in prison.

What were your experiences of education before prison?

What is your experience of education/training in prison?

What problems are there with education/training in prison?

What would improve education/training for Travellers in prison?

We will use your opinions in a short report to be published in the autumn which will be designed to help prisons provide the best training possible for Traveller prisoners.

FREE COPIES OF THE TRAVELLERS' TIMES



We have been working with prisons across the country to improve access to resources for Travellers so we were delighted when our friends at the Travellers' Times told us that they would provide free copies to prisoners/prison staff.

**Contact them at:
info@ruralmedia.co.uk or Travellers'
Times, Packers House, 22-24 West St,
Hereford, HR4 0BX.**

Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative

- Changing Traveller Lives Through Education

In Lincolnshire one charity are taking learning to the people. Their name is Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative and their aim is to bring chances of lifelong learning to Gypsy and Traveller people. They provide education and training on site and it has transformed the lives of many Travellers.

Sixteen year-old, Courtney Smith who is studying for an Arts Award and is about to begin a hair and beauty course at college says:

'When Paul Boucher [of Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative] started coming here, I wasn't really bothered about doing anything like that. But Paul helped me with a lot of things. He is helping me publish a book about my Grandad.'

Paul Boucher of LTI explains what their work is about:

"We work with young Travellers who are on elective home education. It's a council contract but in actual fact we work with all young people that want to work with us."

Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative currently works with more than 50 people and the project is growing all the time. Hopefully projects like this will soon appear across the country!



Klitschko Determined to fight Tyson Fury in the UK



Wladimir Klitschko wants to defend his world heavyweight titles in the UK against Tyson Fury in September or October, according to his American adviser Shelly Finkel and promoter Frank Warren.

"There's a very good chance of it taking place in the UK," Finkel said. "I'm sure Wlad is going to fight Fury in September or October. There's a very good chance of Wembley Stadium or Manchester. It's that big a fight, we believe."

Finkel is insistent that Klitschko intends to end Fury's goading of the Ukrainian, who holds the WBA, WBO and IBF titles. "That goes with the territory. Of course he'd love to shut him up once and for all. He would love to have a fight in the UK. It's a great fight area and Wlad has a big, big fan base there."

Increasing the prospect of the biggest fight in the UK this year, Fury, the mandatory challenger for the WBO crown, has also, just been elevated to the mandatory position for the WBA organisation.

Promoter Frank Warren also admits that negotiations "are definitely on".

"Wladimir Klitschko and Tyson Fury is definitely on – it is now just a question of where and when. The WBO gave us 30 days to complete the talks, and the WBA have given us 60 days. With Billy Joe Saunders and Chris Eubank, and now Fury against Klitschko, we have the two biggest shows in the UK this year. We are looking at several stadiums for the Klitschko-Fury fight, which we believe will sell around 60,000 seats. It is a long-standing world champion against an undefeated challenger."

Billy Joe Preparing for Andy Lee Fight



Traveller boxer Billy Joe Saunders will next fight in Manchester on Saturday, July 11 as he closes in on WBO World Champion Andy Lee for an Autumn showdown.

It has not been confirmed who the 25-year-old from Hertfordshire will take on.

The European middleweight champion will act as chief support to Terry Flanagan as he aims to be crowned WBO World Lightweight Champion as he faces American Jose Zepeda at the the National Cycling Centre.

Promoter Frank Warren said: "Saunders is hot on the heels of a showdown with [Limerick's] Andy Lee for the WBO World title next so he'll be looking to be at his best."

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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Our Staff:
Conn MacGabhann
(Manager)

Ellena Costello (Policy
Officer)

**Remember to register
today in your prison as:**

**'W3 – Gypsy / Irish
Traveller'**

**If you are not counted,
You won't count!**