

**Beyond the Stereotypes:  
A review of Gypsies/Roma/Travellers  
and the Arts in Wales**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Image A: *Dark-haired exotic women in colourful skirts, dancing sensuously by campfires under the open skies and playing the tambourine. Men with dark flashing eyes which glint in the firelight, wildly playing the fiddle ... an element of danger ... they travel in decorated caravans, carefree spirits, stopping only to tell fortunes with crystal balls or Tarot cards. Proud, fiery and independent people, travelling at whim, enjoying the freedom of the open road with their extended family. 'Of a sudden her eyes blazed again and you were solely conscious of a beautiful wild creature.'* [Francis Hindes Groome, in Okely 1983]

Image B: *Hordes of asylum-seeking Gypsy thieves are overrunning our welfare state and using their children as props to beg money on our streets ... On Monday, the Sun announced "victory" for the 52,876 readers who supported its "Britain Has Had Enough" campaign to rid the nation of Gypsy beggars. ("Labour research," the article claims, "shows begging refugees is voters' third-most important issue after health and education.")*  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2000/mar/24/immigration.immigrationandpublicservices>

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in Britain today have an unenviable task when faced with the above images, as the first one they can't live up to, and the second they can never live down.

Since their first appearance in Europe in the fourteenth century, Gypsies have been an emotive subject, and themselves subject to centuries of prejudice, persecution and discrimination. As the Voice Literary Review states, 'Everyone has an opinion on Gypsies, and no one knows any. The opinions are almost always bad.' While Gypsies/Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority, they remain the least integrated and the most persecuted people of Europe today. Yet the Romani culture and language, whilst not always recognised as so doing, has formed part of Europe's cultural and linguistic heritage for over 500 years. During these centuries Gypsies/Roma were at best little understood, and mostly misunderstood. At worst they were the victims of racism, violence and the death penalty (for the crime of being a Gypsy); of various policies of exclusion, containment and forced assimilation; of social ostracism and eventually mass extermination as part of Hitler's Final Solution.

Yet in spite of the worst injustices that humanity can throw at them, Gypsies/Roma have demonstrated a remarkable facility for survival [12 million worldwide], an ability to adapt to the vagaries of settled populations, governments and laws, and above all they have retained their distinct language, culture and identity. However, the question of 'identity' is itself problematic, as Gypsy/Roma identity has been forged through non-Roma means, such as literature, art, film and academic research. As a result, one of the main problems faced by Gypsies/Roma now is that of the stereotypes, good and bad, foisted upon them.

Jake Bowers<sup>[G]</sup> runs the Gypsy Media Company and is a professional journalist. He says: *It's a complex issue: the settled community looks at us through a prism of stereotypes. The two main Gypsy stereotypes are the thief (or degenerate) who contributes nothing, or the romantic Gypsy, unmaterialistic and carefree, who wanders down country lanes with a tambourine.*  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/apr/02/4>

The most common stereotypes are the 'sexy Gypsy'; 'Gypsy fortune teller'; 'folklore/rural Gypsy'; 'rhapsodic/dancing Romany'; 'Gypsy thief/beggar'; 'uneducated Gypsy'; and the 'Gypsy carefree lifestyle' [see <http://thegyptychronicles.net/gypsystereotypes.aspx/>]. In reality, most Gypsies/Roma would prefer to tell you about the suffering and persecution they and/or their ancestors have endured, and to ask you to join the fight against ignorance, prejudice and stereotyping. Dr. Adrian Marsh<sup>[G]</sup>, an English Gypsy, notes: *Like beauty, the image of the various peoples described as Gypsies is frequently to be found in the eyes of the beholder [...] re-presenting the Gypsy using tropes we have come to expect – excessively poor, often itinerant, ignorant and under-educated, disenfranchised politically and marginalised economically, socially excluded and culturally appreciated in a very narrow context.* (Marsh, 2008)

The romanticised image of the Gypsy is alive and well in songs, literature, music groups, fancy-dress costumes and other forms of cultural imagery. A Wikipedia entry on fictional representations of Romani people has an extensive list of Gypsies represented in film (from 1897), literature (from Shakespeare in 1596), games and other media. These are examples of popular culture and do not include the works of the 'Gypsy scholars' in the nineteenth century, or of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century 'orientalists', which would extend the list into hundreds of examples: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional\\_representations\\_of\\_Romani\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional_representations_of_Romani_people). It also does not include the hundreds of Gypsies/Roma depicted in art over many centuries, including examples by Caravaggio, Vincent van Gogh, Augustus John and Renoir. Dr. Ian Hancock<sup>[G]</sup>, Director of Romani Studies at the University of Texas, commented at the GRT National Symposium 2012 held in Cardiff that the romantic Gypsy image proliferated in nineteenth-century literature, and that was 'a safe place to leave it'.

## **2.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF REVIEW**

The aim of this review is therefore to review Gypsy/Roma/Traveller (GRT) 'issues' as they currently stand in Wales, by providing some background context on Gypsies and Roma, and to assess where links are currently being made with the Arts. It will also place the Gypsies of Wales in their historical context, with particular reference to music and the links between Welsh Gypsies and Welsh traditional music. The extent of Arts Council of Wales funding for GRT projects over recent years will be reviewed to assess whether the objectives of the Arts Council and the needs of GRT communities are being met. Hopefully information will be as clear as possible for use by grant assessors, allowing them to move beyond the stereotypes that cause such problems for GRT communities.

It must be borne in mind that reports on GRT subjects are invariably delivered by non-Gypsy institutions with a view to dovetailing their conclusions with the latest 'citizenship' and 'social inclusion' policies. National and international policy-makers seek to establish a (non-Gypsy) framework in which to construct narratives of ethnicity and identity, and this is no less so the case in Wales.

While this review has less grand ambitions, it does fall into the same category of being produced by a non-Gypsy for a non-Gypsy organisation. Therefore it was important to seek the views of Gypsies/Roma/Travellers wherever possible. Interviews have been carried out with a range of individuals who are either Gypsy/Roma/Travellers themselves, or who work closely

with GRT communities. Individual responses are not always explicitly identified throughout the text, as some of the interviewees wished to retain their anonymity in order to speak freely. This has been respected and, whether an interviewee is identified or not, it is noted whether the comment is made by a Gypsy or a non-Gypsy by means of a superscript<sup>[G]</sup> or <sup>[NG]</sup>. Those who work with GRT communities (such as liaison officers or educationalists) have been identified with a superscript <sup>[GW]</sup>.

### 3.0 TERMINOLOGY & DEFINITIONS

Almost all terms referring to Gypsies have been given to them by outsiders, with many different derivations and translations in different countries. A confusion also exists due to the great diversity of groups and subgroups with different names worldwide. The following generally-accepted definitions and terms have been used in this review.

'**Traveller**' refers to anyone with a nomadic way of life and applies to anybody living in vehicles such as caravans, buses or campervans. Travellers are divided into two groups: (1) ethnic travellers such as Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and (2) those who live on the road for economic or ideological reasons, such as New Age Travellers and Showmen.

There are two legal definitions of '**Gypsy**': (1) a recognised ethnic minority under the Race Relations Act, and (2) under planning law, people with a culture of nomadism or of living in caravans and all other persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin. The communities recognised as distinct ethnic minorities are English or Welsh Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Scottish Gypsy Travellers. To achieve this designation communities have to prove that they meet the following conditions, known as the 'Mandla Criteria':

- Long shared history
- Cultural tradition of their own
- Common geographical origin
- Common language
- Common tradition
- Common religion
- Being a minority or being oppressed by a dominant group within a large community

**Gadjé** Plural noun – Romani word for non-Roma or non-Gypsy.

**Gaujo/Gorgio** Anglicized versions of the Romani word for a non-Gypsy.

**Gadjikane** Romani adjective for non-Romani/foreign.

**Gypsy** An abbreviation of the word 'Egyptian', a name given to the Romany people in the Middle Ages when it was thought they originated in Egypt. Anglicized version, used in preference to the alternatives of Gipsy, gypsy or gipsy.

<b>Kalé Gypsies</b>	The branch of Roma that settled in Wales and continued to speak pure Romanés.
<b>Nomad</b>	1. A pastoral nomad, moving with flocks. 2. A commercial nomad, moving to find work.
<b>Pavee</b>	The name used for themselves by Irish Travellers.
<b>Porrajmos</b>	Romani word meaning 'the Devouring' = the Holocaust.
<b>Rom/Roma</b>	The name used for themselves by the majority of Gypsies in Europe. Rom = singular noun for person/man/husband Roma = plural noun for people The word 'Rom' has only one linguistic reference; in Ancient Egyptian 'Rom' = Man.
<b>European Roma</b>	Recognised as an ethnic minority in the same category as British Gypsies who also speak Romani. However, they are distinct from the UK's Gypsy community, with limited interaction between the two groups. Many immigrants have come to Britain from long-settled communities in Eastern Europe.
<b>Romanichal</b>	Noun – Romani word for British Gypsies.
<b>Romany</b>	Noun – anglicized version of the word 'Rom/Romanichal' referring to British Gypsies. First recorded in Britain in 1547. Recognised as an ethnic group for the purposes of the Race Relations Act (1976) in 1988. In Britain, Romanies are further subdivided into English Gypsies/Romanies, Welsh Gypsies/Romanies and Scottish Gypsies/Romanies. These divisions refer to the regions where incoming Gypsies traditionally settled. As Irish Travellers are distinct from these groups ethnically, they were not originally referred to as Gypsies or Romanies.
<b>Romani</b>	Adjective – as in Romani language, history, culture.
<b>Romani/Romanés</b>	Noun – the spoken language of the Romany people.
<b>Traveller</b>	1. Irish nomads of Celtic descent speaking Cant, Gammon or Shelta. First recorded in Britain in the 1850's. Recognised as an ethnic group for the purposes of the Race Relations Act (1976) in 2000.

2. Scottish Gypsy Travellers, made up of a range of different groups and may refer to themselves as Scottish Travellers, Scottish Gypsies, Nawkens or Nachins. May also speak Cant. Recognised as an ethnic group for the purposes of the Race Relations Act (1976) in 2008.

3. An overall term, applied indiscriminately, covering Romany Gypsies as well as Irish and Scottish Travellers.

### **New-Age Traveller**

Members of the settled community who have taken up a nomadic lifestyle in recent decades, with no history of travelling or links to ethnic Romany or Traveller families. Originating in the Peace Convoy and free-festival movements of the 1960s, these are people wishing to live an alternative travelling lifestyle for ideological reasons.

### **Occupational Traveller**

Includes showmen or fairground and circus people who have a long history of travelling for a living. This group also includes bargees or boat dwellers living primarily on narrowboats. Showmen are a cultural minority that have owned and operated funfairs and circuses for many generations, but are not classed as an ethnic minority as their identity is connected to their family businesses and the community can include 'outsiders'.

Kenrick & Bakewell (1995) have divided Gypsies within the U.K, into five main groups:

- (1) The Romanies – descendants of the Romanies who came to England in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This group includes house-dwelling families in England and Wales. They previously spoke Romani, but now speak an anglicized Anglo-Romani dialect.
- (2) The Kalé of North Wales – descendants of the (mainly) Wood family who migrated from south-west England to Wales in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and who spoke the best-preserved inflected Romani until recent years.
- (3) The Roma – Gypsies who have come to England from Europe this century, some of whom speak Romani as their main language.
- (4) Irish Travellers – a nomadic ethnic group from Ireland (non-Romani speaking).
- (5) Scottish Travellers – a nomadic group formed in Scotland in the period 1500-1800 from intermarriage between local nomadic craftsmen and immigrant Gypsies.

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Sources: Kenrick & Bakewell (1995); Travellers Aid Trust [www.travellersaidtrust.org](http://www.travellersaidtrust.org); Travellers' Times magazine [http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/downloads/lifestyle\\_history\\_and\\_culture\\_24052010111520.pdf](http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/downloads/lifestyle_history_and_culture_24052010111520.pdf)

## 4.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Roma people (or perceived lack of it) has a direct influence on GRT communities in the UK today. There has been a great deal of speculation, research and discussion on the origins of the Roma people, with a traditional consensus that they originated in north-west India. Some of the initial connections between Romani and Indian languages were highlighted by Johann Rüdiger, a German scholar, in 1782 and traditional explanations of Roma origins and early migrations since that date have favoured the north-west India theory, based mainly on linguistic research. An Indian connection has been contested by academics, however, and despite many centuries of research, the results are still inconclusive; but there are certain important recurring themes in the history of the Roma which have 'been incorporated into the notions of self-identity for a large number of Gypsy groups' (Marsh, 2008).

Research into the origins and history of the Roma is therefore ongoing but it is precisely this lack of clarity that adds to the confusion over who/what Roma people are and how they should be treated within individual countries. Many Roma are not aware themselves of their history and over centuries have been unable to say definitively who/what they are or where they are from. Instead they relied on inherited traditions, customs and lifestyles, and remained largely within extended family groups. As their collective memory is transmitted as an oral tradition, only fragments of written evidence about these people are found in records of the non-Roma. When questioned, suspicion of the enquirers' motives often led to disingenuous replies from Roma/Gypsies seeking to protect their traditions and lifestyle. This lack of a well-recognised history and clear ethnic identity has led to misunderstanding and misapprehension of Roma/Gypsies, and to research that concentrates on resolving 'problems' or dealing with the social inclusion of a group that often wished to remain deliberately excluded.

So on the one hand there is a body of research by organisations such as the Research and Action Group on Romani Linguistics, set up by the European Commission, which produces research and documentation under the auspices of the Gypsy Research Centre at the Université René Descartes in Paris. This research centre, formed at the request of the Council of Europe, undertakes various studies and produces books, magazines, information documents, and reports, on all aspects of the current Roma/Gypsy situation in Europe. On the other hand, research into Romani history has been undertaken increasingly by Gypsies/Roma themselves, and particularly over the past decade a growing body of Romani-led research has appeared, and is continually being augmented.

Of interest to this review is how Gypsies, and then subsequently Irish Travellers and European Roma, ended up in Wales. Below is the traditional version of events, updated at 4.5 with current hypotheses and contentions and at 7.0 with how Gypsies arrived in Wales.

### 4.1 Who are the Gypsies?

Present-day Gypsies consist of many different groups, 'tribes' and families scattered throughout almost every country in the world. Many of these groups speak Romani (or a Romani dialect) besides the language of the country in which they travel or reside, and most retain certain distinct customs and traditions. However, as Fraser (1995) points out, 'If a people is a group of men, women and children with a common language, a common culture and a

common racial type, who can be readily distinguished from their neighbours, it is a long time since the Gypsies were that.' During centuries of travel, the Gypsies have become a highly dispersed and a highly diverse people, in many countries becoming confused with the ethnic itinerant group(s), and in many countries suffering from conflicting legal definitions as to who is, or is not, a Gypsy for purposes of the law.

#### **4.2 Where did they come from?**

Gypsies/Roma have always been perceived as a nomadic people, seemingly wandering from place to place, and with no homeland of their own. After their arrival in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they most often claimed to be 'Egyptians', which obscured their true origins for three or four centuries. Linguistic research finally identified that the Romani language was closely related to Hindi. Further studies during the nineteenth century concluded that the language must have originated in north-west India, which effectively pinpointed their land of origin as present-day Pakistan. Other linguistic evidence suggested that they left India over a thousand years ago, as their language is more closely related to Sanskrit than to other contemporary Indian languages.

On the basis of linguistic analysis, it is possible to reconstruct the route that the Gypsies/Roma took on their westward journey to Europe. They migrated to the Persian Empire via Kabulistan, Iran and Armenia, reaching the Byzantine Empire by way of Phrygia and Laconia (Tomasevic & Djuric, 1989). It seems that they spent a relatively stable period in Armenia and later in Greece, before moving into central Europe. It is important to note that 'at no time did they move in a solid mass from east to west but their pattern of migration was probably similar to that of today with one family group overtaking another, according to local circumstances and opportunity for work,' (Kenrick & Bakewell, 1995).

It is from their time in Greece that one explanation of the 'Egyptian' origin arises: 'Alexander, Count Palatine by Rhine, described a hill near Modon [in the Peloponnese] called Gype, which in 1495 had about 200 huts inhabited by Gypsies: "some call this hill and its appurtenances Little Egypt";' (Fraser, 1995). When Gypsies began to reach western European towns and cities, they claimed they were from Little Egypt, which began the myth of their Egyptian origin and provided the name by which they are most generally known today.

A second possible explanation was provided by Sebastian Münster in his *Chronographia Universalis* of 1550 who also suggested an 'Egyptian' origin, but with Lesser Egypt being located in the Gangetic or Indus regions (McLean, 2007).

A third possible explanation is outlined below at 4.5.

#### **4.3 Why did they come?**

Kenrick (1993) places the departure from India of the majority of the ancestors of the European Romanies as taking place at various times between 250 and 650 AD. Whilst there is no conclusive evidence to explain why the Gypsies/Roma left India, there are many plausible explanations connected with successive invasions of the north-western region. Following the capture of north India by the Persians, thousands of labourers were brought from India to Persia by Shapur I between 241 and 272 AD. The Shah of Persia brought 12,000 musicians and dancers to Persia between 420 and 438 AD and 10,000 lute players were brought in 1011 to

Shengil (Kenrick, 1993). Three legendary conquerors followed the Persian invasions – Mahmud, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane – and many scholars believe that these three invaders caused mass movements of the Gypsies/Roma, and impelled many of them to leave India (Tomasevic & Djuric, 1989). There is also a suggestion that even earlier movements were caused by the inroads of Alexander the Great into north-western India in 327-326 BC (Fraser, 1995).

After leaving India, the groups moved from country to country, stopping for varying periods in each, but constantly moving on to avoid the frequent wars and conflicts they encountered, until staying for fairly lengthy periods in Armenia and Greece. It is important to note that they were not pastoral nomads, but on their travels the groups continued to practice the crafts and trades they had followed in India as a means of economic survival, as well as adopting and adapting trades from the countries through which they travelled.

#### **4.4 Who are European Gypsies?**

By the fourteenth century Gypsies/Roma were appearing in many western European towns and villages, with their path following a general east-to-west route. The first written mention of Gypsies/Roma in France was recorded in 1419, in Spain 1425, and in Britain 1505. They travelled in large family groups, usually under the leadership of a 'king' or 'count' and carried letters of recommendation or documents of safe-conduct from various dukes, kings, princes and heads of State. In 1422 a group of Gypsies/Roma arriving in Basle produced letters of safe-conduct from the Pope. They most often claimed to be on a religious pilgrimage and at this time 'it was still considered a duty to entertain the pilgrim and help him on his journey' (Fraser, 1995). For purposes of trade and expediency, the Gypsies/Roma usually learned the language of any country in which they stayed for any time, and usually adopted the religion of that country. They generally made a living as craft workers and entertainers.

However, they were not always welcome and were often suspected of espionage. Arriving in countries at a time when the state was attempting to bring order and control, the Gypsies/Roma were treated with mistrust, fear and rejection. 'This rejection, localized at first, rapidly became a state affair with the passing of royal edicts condemning and banishing the Roma on pain of corporal punishment' (Liegeois & Gheorghe, 1995). Within a relatively short space of time, Gypsies/Roma were subject to penal servitude, slavery, expulsion orders, Gypsy hunts and a variety of other medieval anti-Gypsy legislation, including the death penalty for the sole crime of being a Gypsy. With very little evidence, Gypsies were often accused of crimes and a 'negative image was deliberately stressed in order to serve as a basis and justification for repressive measures'.

Anti-Gypsy legislation was gradually repealed after 1780: 'Tolerated when they were useful as farm labour, blacksmiths or entertainers, made to move on when their services were no longer needed, the Gypsies survived on the margins of society until the outbreak of World War II' (Kenrick & Bakewell, 1995). By this time, the 'German preoccupation' of suspected espionage was still being quoted as a justification for genocide (see Kenrick & Puxon 1972 for a full account of Gypsy treatment under the Nazi regime). However, despite estimates of over 500,000 Gypsies having been murdered by the Nazis, the Gypsy/Roma populations throughout the whole of Europe are today conservatively numbered at 9.8 million ['average estimates' of the Council of Europe, 2007], bearing in mind that many Gypsies/Roma do not self-identify themselves as such in order to avoid discrimination and prejudice.

These populations are extremely diverse; made up of different groups, subgroups and extended families and with their language splintered into a myriad of dialects, creoles and regional variations. Their social organisation has been described as 'a worldwide mosaic of diversified groups' (Liegeois, 1994). However, the majority of these groups were born in Europe, as were their ancestors, and besides their group, subgroup or family name, each group is also classified as a French Gypsy, Spanish Gypsy, Italian Gypsy or British Gypsy, depending on where they were born or reside. Whilst there are Spanish Gypsies living in France, and British Gypsies working in Germany to add to the general confusion, there can be no doubt that these Gypsies are a people of Europe: '... the long association and intermingling with other peoples in Europe have indelibly marked their language, their ancestry, their culture and their society. After so many centuries, they have every claim to be considered "of Europe". They are indeed among the continent's few pan-Europeans' (Fraser, 1995).

#### 4.5 Current theories

Dr. Ian Hancock<sup>[6]</sup>, speaking at the GRT National Symposium 2012 in Cardiff, provided an update on current thinking with regard to research on the Roma. He pointed out that the research into origins is still extremely important, as Roma people are still unable to explain where they are from, and non-Roma therefore remain vague and unable to 'pigeonhole' Gypsy/Roma groups. Lack of clarity leads to stereotypical images being augmented and romanticised, and to incomprehension regarding traditions and taboos which affect Gypsy/Roma culture and lifestyles today. The summarised points of current theories are:

- Researchers are now learning much more about Roma origins, and the current estimate of Roma populations is 12 million worldwide.
- 'A geneticist's summary of [our] data would describe the Gypsies as a conglomerate of Asian populations ... unambiguous proof of the Indian ancestry of the Gypsies comes from three genetic marker systems ... found on the same ancestral chromosomal background in Gypsy, Indian and Pakistani subjects' (Kalaydjieva *et al*, 2005).
- It is now thought that the Roma began as a composite people from India, but they were not originally one people. Instead, the population was occupationally rather than ethnically-defined, being drawn from mercenary soldiers, camp followers, itinerant castes of artisans and entertainers, musicians and dancers, smiths, metalworkers, basket weavers, etc.
- The language has been identified as a composite of different Indian languages, which would support this theory, with development of *Romanés* as an individual language happening through 'contact' with other cultures and languages outside India.
- Whilst their earliest components are traceable to India in the East, Roma essentially constitute a population that acquired its identity and language in the West. The idea that Roma had Indian roots, but crystallised into a cohesive people during the Byzantine period is now gaining credence. The self-ascribed name 'Rom/Roma' is from the Greek-speaking, Christian, Byzantine Empire and was acquired during the population's long stay in Anatolia. 'Any originally acquired characteristics they might

*still share ... are greatly outweighed by characteristics accreted from the non-Romani world.'* There is no longer one people in India clearly related to the Roma.

- Dr. Adrian Marsh<sup>[6]</sup> (2008) states: 'The argument that they were 'forged' in the borderlands of Anatolia between the hammer of the Saldjūk Turks and the anvil of the Byzantine Empire in the twelfth century is becoming more widely accepted, though not uncontested.'
- Dates for leaving India remain contested, with the earliest migrations seemingly dating from the time of Alexander the Great's incursions, and successive migrations coinciding with other military incursions. However, the main exodus appears to be between AD 997 and 1030 as a result of invasions by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, ruler of the Persian Ghaznavid Empire. This dislocated the 'composite' groups from north-west India [Pakistan] who migrated to the Persian Empire via Kabulistan [Afghanistan], Iran and Armenia, before reaching (1) Anatolia [Turkey]; (2) Jordan and the Levant coast; and (3) the Byzantine Empire [eastern Roman Empire whose capital was Constantinople].
- Byzantine sources refer to Roma as *Athínganoi* (people who practised ritual purity ablutions, and who practised magic, soothsaying and snake-charming) and *Aiguptoi* ('Egyptians' – people who maintained similar pollution taboos, and who practised sorcery and divination). These two terms are the root of all designations assigned to Gypsies by non-Roma.  
Athínganoi ⇒ the terms Cigány, Tsigan, Zingaro, etc.  
Aiguptoi ⇒ the terms Aigypt[an]oi, Gypsy, Gitano, etc.  
(Marsh, 2008 and Avraham, 2012)  
The arrival of Roma in Jordan and the Levant coincides with the period when the region was controlled by the Fatemide Egyptians (late 900s to 1070 AD).
- The entry of the Roma into Europe from Anatolia was not as a single exodus, but as a number of smaller migrations over as much as a two-century timespan, leading to a splintering across European countries. This accounts in part for the lack of cohesiveness among the various groups in Europe self-identifying as Roma, and for the major dialect splits within the language.
- The first wave travelled the furthest, reaching Britain, Scandinavia and Spain. The second wave reached 'less far', to central Europe. The third wave reached only as far as the Balkans, where many Roma were held in slavery.
- As the Roma arrived in Europe as different groups, they therefore hold different notions about self-identity and divide into different factions. There are also different levels and retention of Romani culture between groups. These differences have not been acknowledged and accommodated, with different groups being defined by their behaviour, rather than culture and ethnicity. Within Europe, others who shared similar behaviour (itinerants, economic migrants, show people) were lumped together with Roma and all labelled 'Gypsies'.

- Within the UK, Romanies, Gypsies, Irish/Scottish Travellers, Showmen and other economic travellers are often all labelled Travellers.
- Most Travellers no longer travel.
- The current call for Roma 'reunification' is misguided as the Roma were never one people in one place at one time. Their roots are in Asia, but they were not originally unified in Asia and only existed as a relatively cohesive group in the West.

## 5.0 TRADITIONS AND TABOOS

Romany Law is at the heart of the cultural and spiritual character of the Roma people, and these cultural and spiritual aspects have been classified by Sándor (2012) into two main categories:

1. Hebrew-related\* beliefs, laws, rules and practices; very important within Roma community life.
2. Fire-worship-related practices and some elements connected with belief; mostly regulating the relationship with the non-Roma environment.

*\*Other authorities trace Romany rituals to Hindu sources, although their essential practice remains the same.*

A wide range of customs and traditions have also been adopted by Gypsies/Roma from each country through which they have travelled or stayed for any length of time. For example, many ancient fire-worship practices were adopted during sojourns in the Persian Empire, and divination practices adopted from the Persian magi. These customs vary from country to country, but the main traditions which have remained consistent, and which continue to affect the Gypsy/Roma way of life today, are:

- Strict cleanliness rituals and taboos – *that differ from those of the settled community*
- Justice and Religion
- Strict rituals regarding marriage, sexual relations, birth and death
- Nomadism/travelling/freedom
- Self-employment, self-reliance and independence
- Strong oral traditions and shared culture
- Importance of extended family

The most conservative and exclusivist of European Roma have strict patterns that are strongly founded on the Romani language and Romany Law. They do not consider as Roma any groups who do not speak *Romanés*, or who speak a dialect of it that is unintelligible for them (such as British Romanies who have largely lost the pure *Romanés* language). Differences between groups are also established according to the degree of observance of the Romany Law, and many groups have either lost their strict adherence to ancient traditions, or adhere to traditions without knowing why they do so. This ancient psychological heritage is transferred unconsciously from generation to generation, and the most important element of it is the *marimé* or *mochadi* cleanliness laws (see below).

In Britain, each 'Traveller' group has distinct customs and traditions which sets them apart from others, and which can vary from group to group within a specific community. Romany Gypsies in particular feel very strongly that they should not be grouped together with other 'types' of Traveller, including other 'traditional' Travellers, which can be very offensive to them and creates a strong divide. However, due to living in close proximity with other traveller groups, there has been some cross-over of customs and practices between them. In particular, Irish Travellers have adopted some Romany Gypsy customs and traditions. There has been inter-marriage between the groups despite their differences and tensions, and different groups live and work alongside each other without conflict due to the common features of nomadism, self-reliance, and a strong sense of family and community. There are also forums where different Traveller groups work together to achieve common aims. However, it is very important to acknowledge and respect the differences between the various groups of Travellers in the UK today, who have invariably been herded together by a non-Gypsy local authority onto a designated site.

The lists of customs and taboos below are not therefore comprehensive, as there are many variations across groups and countries, but these are the ones that appear to remain consistent, either in practice or in the group's folk memory and which cause great misunderstanding in Britain.

### **5.1 Cleanliness rituals and taboos**

In matters of cleanliness Gypsies/Roma take into account spiritual purity as well as physical hygiene. Complex pollution taboos demonstrate a fundamental distinction between the inside of the body and the outside. The outer body symbolises the public self and acts as a protective covering for the inside which must be kept pure and inviolate. The inner body symbolises the secret ethnic self, a sustained individuality, and is reaffirmed by the solidarity of the Gypsy group. Gypsies/Roma distinguish between something being dirty and something ritually unclean. The word *chikli* means 'dirty' in a harmless way. But the word *mochadi* (or *marimé*) means 'ritually polluted'. A person's face and clothes can be black with grime but not *mochadi*, so long as the inner body is clean. The *Gadjé* are condemned as *mochadi* by definition since they are not Gypsy and do not distinguish between the inner and outer body. The outer body (or skin) with its discarded scales, accumulated dirt, by-products of hair and waste such as faeces are all potentially polluting if recycled through the inner body. By contrast, anything taken into the inner body via the mouth (and eating implements) must be ritually clean ... the outer body must be kept separate from the inner. (Okely, 1983)

There also is a spiritual rationale. Gypsies/Roma believe in the importance of spiritual energy, called *dji*, which is drained when too much time is spent in the *jado*, the non-Romani world. The only remedy is to reimmerge oneself in an all-Romani milieu, which is another reason that the Roma tend to keep to themselves. The Gypsy/Roma beliefs create and express symbolic boundaries between themselves and the majority society, leading to endless conflicts, confrontations and cultural misunderstandings.

The concept of *marimé* is the inverse of the Jewish concept of *kosher* – what is *marimé* for a Rom is not *kosher* for a Jew – and extensive measures are taken to avoid becoming spiritually defiled or polluted. If contamination is unavoidable, clear rules are followed to become

purified. The rules that regulate *marimé/mochadi* are a fundamental value in Romany society that conditions their relationship with the external world. Gypsies/Roma classify everything into two categories: *vuzho* (pure) or *marimé* (impure – although the term used more commonly in Britain is *mochadi*, so this will be used here). This classification covers the human body, the spiritual realm, the house or camp, animals, things and *Gadjé* (non-Roma). Some examples are:

- As *Gadjé* do not know the laws regarding *mochadi*, it is assumed that they are impure and are avoided. Many Roma will not enter a *Gadjé* house or eat with them.
- A *Gadjé* person visiting a Gypsy caravan may not be allowed entry due to the expense involved in destroying and replacing the caravan. Separate crockery and utensils are used for Gypsy and any non-Gypsy visitors (tea often taken outside the caravan). Irish Travellers, whilst adopting many customs of Romany Gypsies, are more likely to admit visitors to their caravans.
- *Gadjé* institutions are used as a 'free trade area' where impure activities may be performed with safety (such as a hospital).
- The lower part of the body and genitals are considered impure.
- Bodily discharge is impure.
- The upper body is pure.
- Whatever is touched by the lower body is impure (beds, shoes, chairs, floor); anything touched by the upper body is pure (tables). Any plates or cups placed on the floor, or accidentally dropped, are destroyed.
- The act of sleeping is considered impure, and Gypsies/Roma do not greet anybody until having washed after waking.
- Cats, rats, mice, dogs and foxes are impure because they lick themselves; impure animals cannot be eaten.
- Horses are ritually pure.
- The hands have to perform pure and impure acts, therefore must be washed in a particular way – with separate soap and dried with a separate towel.
- Different soaps and towels are always used for the upper and lower body.
- Showering in running water is pure, sitting in a bath is impure.
- Most Gypsy/Roma men still retain facial whiskers, a tradition that supposedly originated in a commandment from God.
- Washing activity of the person, clothes or dishes must take place outside the caravan, with different non-interchangeable bowls used for different types of washing. This adds up to a large stock of bowls per family, all used for different purposes.
- Dishes and cooking utensils must be washed in a bowl kept specifically for that purpose. Only the washing-up bowl is allowed inside the caravan, all other bowls are placed outside the trailer *but not on the floor*.
- Animal receptacles must be washed in an entirely separate bowl.
- Impure clothes (lower body clothes) must be washed in separate bowls from pure clothes (upper body and children's clothes); pure clothes must be separated from tablecloths, napkins, etc. which have a further separate bowl.
- All women's clothing is impure during menstruation.
- The camp (or house if necessary) is spiritually pure, and physiological activity must take place outside it. This means that toilet facilities are placed outside the camp, and Gypsies will not use the built-in toilet or shower in their caravans (this compartment is

usually used for storage). Public health inspectors then prosecute Gypsies for not having toilets in their caravans.

- Houses, wherever possible, should have an outside toilet. Local authorities build separate washing blocks on their designated caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers, but often Gypsies will not use them if the washing facilities are combined with cooking facilities.
- Gypsies board up the sinks provided in caravans, or commission trailers without them – ordering a continuous Formica ledge instead on which to place crockery bowls.
- Garbage must be thrown at an acceptable distance from the camp (giving rise to spotlessly clean interiors of caravans, and scrap and garbage gathering outside the caravan). No waste bins are kept inside a caravan.
- If cooking on an outdoor fire, it must be a separate fire from one used for burning or cleaning metal.
- Doctors are impure because they deal with illness and death.
- Vaccination is impure because it introduces pollution to the inner body. Many Gypsy families refuse to allow their children to be vaccinated.

## 5.2 Justice and Religion

### JUSTICE

- There are no social classes. The only sharp division exists between Roma and *Gadjé*.
- Most Romany law is passed on verbally.
- The Romany Court is the Assembly or *Kris*, composed of family/clan judges. In the UK this takes the form of the Romany Council.
- Disputes among Roma cannot be judged by *Gadjé*, only by the *Kris*.
- All Roma are equal before the *Kris*, which must be impartial.
- If a serious offence is committed by a Roma person or family, the *Kris* can judge that the person/family be banished from the territory of other Roma.
- Roma cannot maintain any kind of relationship with the banished person.
- Roma cannot ask interest on loans from their own people, but they can so do from *Gadjé*.
- The custom of asking for items from *Gadjé* (begging) is believed to be an ancient commandment from God

### RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Roma usually confess an 'official' religion, based on the religion of their adopted country. Beyond this, their essential beliefs include:

- Strict monotheism.
- An accessible God with no intermediary.
- No traditional image, symbol or portrayal of any Divinity.
- The existence of a spiritual world, consisting of pure and impure spirits representing good and evil.
- Blasphemy is considered a great sin, as is cursing an elder (but cursing *Gadjé* is an acceptable way of ensuring distance with the 'impure').
- Current phenomenon of conversion to Evangelical movements, leading to abandonment of ancestral fire-worship elements and divination practices.

Complementary superstitious elements:

- Having a lighted fire in the house permanently, day and night, winter and summer (a tradition that is still kept by the most conservative families, while in general is evolving into a 'symbolic' fire like the TV set, always switched on though nobody is actually watching).
- Contrary to popular belief, Roma do not believe in divination themselves, but use practices such as fortune-telling, palmistry and Tarot outwardly to earn money from *Gadjé*.

### 5.3 Marriage, sexual relations, birth and death

#### MARRIAGE

- Virginity before marriage is essential.
- Tokens of virginity are shown to assembled relatives after the wedding.
- Incest is forbidden with close relatives, but marrying cousins is acceptable.
- Marriage is an obligation for men and women who are expected to marry in their late teens.
- Dating before marriage is strictly forbidden. Matches are made by family elders, sometimes to forge ties with another family.
- The custom of 'grabbing' (as seen on *Big Fat Gypsy Weddings*) relates to a custom of abduction or capture of brides followed by Irish Travellers. This is based on the Celtic practice of 'dragging home the bride' in Ireland. (Jarman, 1991)
- The groom's family pays a dowry to the bride's family.
- After marriage, the bride usually becomes a part of the groom's family and lives with his parents.
- The bride is expected to work for the groom's family.
- Runaway couples are considered legitimately married.
- In Wales, a traditional Gypsy marriage was 'over the broom': ... *a branch of broom, preferably in flower, or failing that a besom made of broom, was jumped over by the bride and bridegroom* (Jarman, 1991). Possibly borrowed from the rural Welsh communities, references to these Gypsy marriages preserve the last examples of their survival in Wales.
- Marriage among Gypsies/Roma is usually within the same group of families – not a rigid rule but observed by the majority of Gypsies/Roma.
- Marrying a non-Roma is usually taboo.
- Divorce is acceptable, but a re-married woman cannot return to her first husband.
- Members of the *Kris* must be married.

#### SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

- Female sexuality is seen as polluting if mismanaged; therefore virginity before marriage is essential, and prostitution strongly condemned.
- The *Gadjé* view of Gypsy women as sensual and provocative contrasts starkly with the Gypsy view of Gypsy women, who are scrutinised and their sexual behaviour controlled (a Romany woman cannot be alone with a man who is not her husband). *Gadjé* women are thought by Gypsies to demonstrate uncontrolled sexuality, with revealing clothes and provocative make-up; many are seen as prostitutes.
- Nakedness is taboo except between husband and wife.

- To show one's legs before an elder is a lack of respect.
- Images of erotic scenes are forbidden with a Romany home.
- Gypsies/Roma are not allowed to wear clothes of the opposite gender, even in jest.
- Homosexuality is considered shameful and an abomination, and is quite rare; it usually entails exclusion of the individual from the community.
- A Cardiff Romany woman has recently been convicted of homophobic abuse, demonstrating the difference between her beliefs and beliefs of the wider society: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2186095/Jayne-Collins-Woman-claiming-Romany-gypsy-princess-facing-jail-homophobic-abuse-Cardiff.html>

#### BIRTH

- Menstruation is considered impure and a woman may not cook, wash up or handle food during this time. She must not step over a fire, a man sitting down, or anything else that may become defiled. She must pass behind rather than in front of a man. She must not step over or cross a stream with running water.
- Any Romani Gypsy woman in the higher floors in a house 'pollutes' the rest of the people in the house below her (Weyrauch, 2001). Walking over water-pipes buried in the ground would make the tap water *mochadi* (Jarman, 1991).
- Childbirth is an impure event and should take place outside the camp. This makes it acceptable for childbirth to take place in a *Gadjé* hospital, which is already impure.
- The mother and child are isolated for seven days, followed by 33 days of semi-isolation.
- During the 40 days of a woman's child-bearing and recovery (purification), she cannot touch any pure items or perform an activity such as cooking. She is allocated separate crockery which is destroyed at the end of the 40 days. Clothes and beds used during the 40 days are also destroyed.
- Gypsies/Roma consider the firstborn son to be a special blessing for the family.
- Gypsy/Roma families often have many children, in keeping with the Romani aphorism *but chave but baxt* (many children much luck). Children are often viewed as an economic resource, helping to earn income and keep employment within the family.

#### DEATH

- Death is a definitive passage to the spiritual world, there are no ideas of reincarnation.
- The dead person is impure during their journey to the realm of the souls, and all items connected with the person are impure. The body cannot be touched.
- Relatives of the dead are impure for seven days and cannot bathe, comb hair or cut their nails during that time. On the third day they must wash and perform ritual cleansing.
- All food in the dead person's house is considered defiled and is thrown away.
- All property belonging to the dead person is destroyed, preferably burned (ritually cleansing). This extended to valuable wooden caravans, even if it left the remaining family homeless.
- Mourners stay at home, sit on low stools, cover the mirrors, do not use perfumes or cosmetics, do not wear new clothes, do not listen to music, nor take photographs, nor watch TV, do not paint, cannot cook and cannot greet people.
- The dead must be buried intact, which means organ removal and autopsy are not allowed. Burning the dead is a great sacrilege.
- Gypsy/Roma destiny after death is Paradise.

## 5.4 Nomadism/travelling/freedom

Since leaving India so many centuries ago, Gypsies/Roma have travelled through numerous countries without any sense of a 'homeland'. They have moved because of migration due to wars, expulsion due to legislation against them, forced migration due to racist attacks, eviction and deportation, but always for survival – and primarily in order to earn a living. Gypsies/Roma have never been nomads in the sense of herding or agriculture. Commerce is one of the most important factors in the decision to move and travel, and for Gypsy/Roma tradesmen or craftsmen finding customers has always been the main motive for travel. However, with members of the extended family so dispersed, travel is also necessary to maintain social ties, and after so many centuries of travelling as a way of life, the ethos of freedom and travel is part of the Gypsy's heritage.

However, Gypsies remain 'nomadic' even when not travelling, and one of the most important concepts to understand when considering Gypsy principles of freedom is that 'nomadism is more a state of mind than a state of fact' (Liegeois, 1994). Even when they 'settle' Gypsies are still 'travellers' and retain a nomadic frame of mind. The essence of travel as a folk memory is as much a psychological need as an economic one, and the two have combined to produce a fundamental component of Gypsy life and 'culture' in the UK. A 'settled' Gypsy will often have a caravan parked outside the house and 'always petrol in the motor'<sup>[G]</sup>. Gypsies who have been forcibly 'settled' on sites would continue an economic nomadism if they were not prevented from doing so by outside forces, or the terms of their site licence. The most common response to the concept of freedom, however, is: 'freedom means the freedom to stop without being harassed'<sup>[G]</sup>.

The ability of Gypsies and Travellers to maintain a mobile lifestyle, key to their definition in law, has become increasingly difficult. UK planning legislation has reduced the number of places where Gypsies and Travellers can legally stop. Work patterns have also changed in recent years and many Gypsies and Travellers undertake work which does not require them to adopt a nomadic lifestyle. Access to services and education have also affected Gypsy and Traveller patterns of travelling.

The pattern of travelling within GRT groupings varies between:

- a) Maintaining an entirely nomadic lifestyle.
- b) Residing in settled housing for part of the year.
- c) Residing in authorised local authority campsites.
- d) Residing in private campsites.
- e) Residing in unauthorised campsites.
- f) Maintaining an entirely settled lifestyle but retaining the identity of 'Traveller'.

While there are exceptions, the general picture built up of residential Gypsy/Traveller sites is that they are stable, with long-term residents who travel little during the course of a year. It may be that, for many residents, the attractions of a site lie in the possibilities of living within a culturally distinct community among friends and family. However, to remain a 'Gypsy' in terms of planning law, part of a Gypsy's living must be earned in a nomadic way. Gypsies living on authorised sites therefore began relying more on the horse fairs for their cultural and legal nomadism, and for retaining extended family ties. However, as Liegeois (1994) has noted: 'As

far as Gypsies and Travellers themselves are concerned, there is generally no sense of "progress" attached to passing from a caravan to a house: such change is a temporary result of compromise, and may indeed, if too strongly imposed from without, be seen as a step downwards.'

Recently a Gypsy won the right to live in a caravan after saying he couldn't get a good night's sleep in his three-bedroom home: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2187354/Gypsy-wins-right-live-caravan-saying-good-nights-sleep-home.html>

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Source: Select Committee on Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Thirteenth Report <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmodpm/633/63306.htm>

## **5.5 Self-employment**

A Gypsy/Roma family unit typically encompasses multiple generations, and includes a patriarch and matriarch, their unmarried offspring (both young and adult), and a married son, his wife, and their children. By the time an older son is ready to establish his own household, a younger son often will have married and brought his wife and children into the family to take the place of the departing sibling. Economic activities take place within the framework of the family group, which is the basic economic unit, and children learn the various trades of the family alongside their parents on a day-to-day basis. This method also provides training in diversity, change, variety and flexibility. As a people on the move, their oral tradition imparts economic training as well as entertainment and the core ideas of their culture.

Gypsies/Roma have never been self-sufficient in the same way as pastoral nomads, but have always been dependent upon the larger economy. They have always been peripatetic economic nomads through the sale of goods or services. Pastoralism ⇒ labour, livestock and pasture. Peripatetics ⇒ labour, customers and goods or skills.

Having been displaced from India, the main occupations which the Gypsies/Roma had followed were continued on a nomadic basis when they began to move from country to country for survival. The four main occupations were metalwork, entertainment, craftwork and general trading. Many variations of these basic trades were developed, and many other skills added as the need arose, but even today many Gypsies still follow a modern version of these original occupations. More important is that the strategies for economic survival which were originally employed are still in use, although adapted and varied to suit modern conditions in different countries and regions. As itinerant communities their sources of subsistence have always been in relation to sedentary customers through the provision of specialised goods or services, and through the exploitation of seasonal or periodic opportunities. Below is a breakdown of traditional and current trades and occupations.

In order to maximise their economic opportunities and chances of survival, certain fundamental factors are of paramount importance to Gypsies/Roma/Travellers:

- a) adaptability to social, geographical, occupational and economic situations;
- b) self-employment and independence from wage-labour; and
- c) nomadism – the ability to travel to find customers.

It is these factors which contribute in large measure to the essence of being a Romany Gypsy (whether 'settled' or not) and their 'economic independence has been a near-universal correlate of the maintenance of ethnic identity' (Acton 1974). However, it is just these same factors which have been the cause of centuries of prejudice and discrimination – problems which are still apparent today and which are central to European Union policies on Roma/Gypsies.

#### **GYPSY/TRAVELLER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS**

<b>Metalwork</b>	<b>Entertainment (Main)</b>	<b>Entertainment (Secondary)</b>	<b>Craft work</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Trade/Service</b>
<b>Traditional Trades and Occupations</b>					
Weapon makers	Singers	Circus artistes	Woodcarvers	Forced soldiers	General traders
Tinsmiths	Dancers	Jugglers	Basket makers	Mercenary soldiers	Hawking small goods
Blacksmiths	Musicians	Horse traders	Leather workers	Guards	Rag collection
Coppersmiths	Jugglers	Vets	Shoe makers	Agricultural workers	
Gold panners	Animal handlers	Bear trainers	Peg makers	War labour (snipers, scouts, vets, soldiers)	
Munitions workers	Soothsayers	Snake charmers		Camp providers	
Knife grinders		Healers			
Scrap dealers		Astrologers			
		Fortune tellers			
<b>Most Common Current Trades and Occupations</b>					
Scrap dealing	Singers	Horse trading	Wagon building	Farm work	Roofing/Building
Car breaking	Dancers	Boxing	Wagon restoring	Fruit/veg picking	Tarmac laying
Secondhand car dealing	Musicians			Factory work	Barn spraying
	Cabaret artists				Tree lopping/logs
	Fortune tellers				Carpet selling
					Antique/general dealing
					Lawyers
					Teachers
					Politicians
					Journalists

Gypsies/Travellers in the UK do not train generally for a single occupation. They are involved in a number of activities, any one of which may come to the fore at any given time, to meet the needs of the moment. Traditionally, a family may have been involved in scrap collection in the winter, fruit or potato picking in the spring and summer, general building work as it became available, and the buying and selling of horses or general goods at Gypsy horse fairs during the fair season. Activities are dropped or taken up as circumstances or the seasons dictate. Gypsy/Traveller children typically receive just a basic education to the end of primary school, and are then often withdrawn from school in order to take part in the family's economic activities.

Due to site provision and enforced settlement, full economic nomadism is being replaced by mobility from a semi-fixed base. Improved transport makes it possible to work a relatively large area from a fixed base, without having to move the whole family so often, and Gypsies/Travellers have adopted the use of the mobile telephone very extensively. However, these are strategies to adapt yet again to imposed restrictions, as forced sedentarism militates against moving freely to provide labour, goods and services. Site provision in its present form equates with control, not freedom of movement. The truly geographically mobile trader can gain significant advantages in price differences and availability of goods in different areas, as well as capitalise on untapped markets for his goods and services. This economic freedom is denied those Gypsies/Travellers forced to live on sites, who in many cases must resort to social security as their only means of survival. Whether 'settled' or mobile, Gypsies and Travellers prefer to retain their self-employed status at all times.

#### **GYPSY/TRAVELLER REASONS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT**

<b>Wage-labour employment</b>	<b>Gypsy/Traveller occupations</b>
1. Employee.	1. Self-employed.
2. Dependence on a single trade or industry.	2. Diversified occupations.
3. Capital-intensive technology.	3. Labour-intensive.
4. 'Unskilled' labour or specific skills.	4. Less specific, more wide-ranging aptitudes or skills.
5. Work away from the family and home.	5. Family often involved in production. Some work in home setting.
6. Work/leisure division of hours, days and weeks. Set holidays.	6. No work/leisure division. Time off a personal choice. No set holidays.
7. Orders from above. Usually fixed routine.	7. Self-imposed orders and decisions. Routine is self-structured.
8. Training and education in institutions external to the family, e.g. school and college.	8. Family-based training and education.
9. Wage payment.	9. Individually negotiable prices and profits.
10. Short-term security of a regular fixed wage.	10. Short-term insecurity with unpredictable losses, but the promise of a windfall.
11. Possibility of long-term insecurity; the sack or redundancy.	11. Some long-term security; independence from an employer and flexibility in occupation.
12. Sick benefit and unemployment money. Diminished support from kin and neighbours.	12. No sick benefit, no unemployment money. No Social Security benefits if no fixed address. Assistance from kin and neighbours.
13. Compulsory retirement in most cases. Pension or Social Security.	13. Some self-employment in old age. No pension. Social Security benefit available.
14. Fixed location.	14. Geographical mobility.
15. Work may be available but no housing.	15. Work may be available but no legal stopping-place.

Source: Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies* (1983)

The fact remains that Gypsies/Travellers continue to follow particular trades and to supply goods and services to the host community because a demand exists, and because they have the skills to satisfy those demands. They also have the flexibility to adapt their skills as circumstances or their customers' demands change. But in order to do this, they must travel to where their customers are, and stop long enough in one place to supply the services required. This invariably means stopping on the outskirts of a town – close enough to service their clients, but separate enough to be considered vagrants, parasites, outcasts, marginalised or deviants in need of assimilation or integrationist policies.

The tightening up of regulations on small-scale trading is a general problem in Europe, with many EU regulations and imposition of new laws now making it impossible for Gypsies/Travellers to practise traditional independent trades. Even when operating from a fixed base on a regular trade circuit, the complex red tape and requirement for licences causes huge problems for an under-educated group. Within the UK the introduction of written examinations as a compulsory part of the British driving test automatically discriminated against an uneducated Gypsy/Traveller minority. As driving is an integral part of the Gypsy/Traveller way of life, the inability to gain a licence decreases substantially the scope for earning a living.

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Sources: Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies* (1983); Travellers Aid Trust <http://travellersaidtrust.org>;

Sándor<sup>[G]</sup>, 'Comparison of Romany Law with Israelite Law and Indo-Aryan Traditions'

<http://www.imninalu.net/Roma.htm>;

National Geographic online at: <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/american-gypsies/romani-culture-and-traditions/>

## 6.0 LEGAL STATUS

In the UK Gypsies/Roma/Travellers are subject to the same laws as the settled community. However, there are certain laws that affect the travelling community disproportionately. The area where there is most conflict relates to their nomadic existence and unauthorised encampment. Due to this nomadic lifestyle Gypsies/Travellers are frequently subject to offences regarding criminal damage, refuse disposal, road traffic and trespass. Since the introduction of the European Convention on Human Rights, however, a toleration policy has been developed by the Department of the Environment regarding unauthorised encampments. Given the lack of official campsites in the UK a non-harassment policy has become necessary, although implementation of this policy has been fragmented nationally, with some areas adopting this policy and others resorting to legislative measures. Use of these powers can prove problematical with the potential for breaches of the European Convention on Human Rights and Race Relations acts. There is now a general duty on the police and government authorities to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; to promote equality of opportunity, and to promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

The few cases regarding Gypsy/Traveller issues that have been decided in the European Courts commented that there *had* been interference with Gypsy/Traveller rights. The main Convention rights affecting Gypsies/Roma/Travellers are the right to private and family life, and the right of prohibition of discrimination.

At present the definitions currently employed in UK law (used variously, depending on the case in hand), are:

(a) The definition of a Gypsy in the Caravan Sites Act 1968 is: *Persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or persons engaged in travelling circuses travelling together as such.*

(b) However, in May 1994, Lord Justice Neil found the 1968 Act definition unsatisfactory, and defined Gypsies as: *Persons who wander or travel for the purpose of making or seeking their livelihood (not persons who move from place to place without any connection between their*

*movements and their means of livelihood*). It is this definition which is currently used by Government. It focuses on habitual lifestyle rather than ethnicity and includes 'born' Gypsies and Travellers and 'elective' Travellers such as New Age Travellers.

(c) For the purposes of the Race Relations Act 1976 the essential conditions for persons to constitute a 'racial group' are: (i) a long shared history, of which the group is conscious as distinguishing it from other groups, and the memory of which it keeps alive; (ii) a cultural tradition of its own, including family and social customs and manners, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance.

These various definitions all serve to confuse the issue of who is and who isn't a Gypsy in the eyes of the law, governments, the Gypsies themselves, and the non-Gypsy population. A 1994 appeal case ruled that the term 'nomad' entailed 'not just travel, but regular travel for an economic purpose.' As Kenrick & Bakewell (1995) point out, this means that *Romany Gypsies living on a caravan site who travel only to visit fairs to see friends and relatives lose their status as 'Gypsies' under the 1968 Act. On the other hand New Age Travellers who travel either to work or to seek work may acquire the status of 'Gypsies'.*

The broad term 'Traveller' is now used to cover all types of travelling groups, whether Gypsy or not, with the result that all Gypsies are Travellers (whether settled or mobile), but not all Travellers are ethnically Gypsies. Many Gypsies and Travellers now live increasingly sedentary lifestyles. The current definitions imply that those within the community who do not adopt a nomadic lifestyle are not actually Gypsies and Travellers.

In Wales the Welsh Assembly Government has a general duty to ensure equality of opportunity for all people without reference to membership of specific groups. The Equality of Opportunity Committee argued that Gypsies and Travellers should have the right to self-identify.

### **Timeline for British Gypsies/Travellers and Legislation**

From their first appearance in Britain, Gypsies came in small family groups seeking opportunities to carry on existing trades and occupations amongst settled populations. There was little space for them and no chance to establish ... the only place for the Gypsies was, therefore, on the fringes of society where they had to make a living as best as they could. (Kenrick & Bakewell, 1995)

#### **1100s Ireland**

Travellers first recorded in Ireland. Travelling tinsmiths mentioned in Scottish records. By the twelfth century the name Tynkler and Tynker (derived from 'tinheard', meaning 'tinsmith') emerged in reference to a group of nomads who maintained a separate identity, social organisation, and dialect.

#### **1200s Britain**

Many fairs are created by Royal Charter.

- 1505 Scotland**  
First authenticated record of Gypsies in Scotland. This means they probably arrived some time during the fifteenth century. King James IV of Scotland pays seven pounds to 'Egyptians' stopped at Stirling, who may have come from Spain. Parish records from around this time show that Irish Travellers are already living in England.
- 1510 England**  
Two ladies dressed up as Gypsies for a masked court ball, indicating Gypsies were in England for some years prior to this date.
- 1514 England**  
First mention of a Gypsy in England recorded at Lambeth.
- 1530 England and Wales**  
Gypsies are forbidden to enter England under Henry VIII. Those already there are deported.
- 1540 Scotland**  
Gypsies allowed to live under their own laws.
- 1544 England**  
Gypsies deported to Norway.
- 1547** Andrew Boorde, an English physician and writer, published *The Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge* in which the Romani language is recorded as 'Egipt speche' for the first time.
- 1554 England – Egyptians Act**  
Queen Mary passes the Egyptians Act. Being a Gypsy is punishable by death, as is being found in 'the fellowship or company of Egyptians'. This is the only time that fraternising with an ethnic community has been punishable by death. The death penalty is imposed for any Gypsy not leaving the country within a month.
- 1562 England**  
Provision of previous Acts widened to include people who live and travel like Gypsies. Travelling is either on foot or with two-wheeled tilted carts with a canvas cover. Many Gypsies live in makeshift bender tents, and will continue to do so until the mid-late twentieth century.
- 1572 England**  
First recorded Gypsy presence in Leeds Parish registers.
- 1573 Scotland**  
Gypsies ordered either to stop travelling and settle down or leave the country.
- 1579 Wales**  
First records of Kalé Gypsies in Radnor.

- 1596 York, England**  
Mass execution of Gypsies in the city.
- 1596 England**  
Shakespeare refers to Romanies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – '*Sees Helen's beauty in the brow of Egypt*'.
- 1600 England**  
Shakespeare refers to fortune telling in *As You Like It*.
- 1603 England**  
In *Othello*, Desdemona's handkerchief is a gift from a gypsy 'Egyptian charmer'.
- 1611 Scotland**  
Three Gypsies hanged (under 1554 law).
- 1650s England**  
Last known hanging for the crime of being a Gypsy, in Suffolk, England. Gypsies are deported to America.
- 1685 England**  
Appleby Fair granted chartered fair status in 1685 by James II.
- 1714 Scotland**  
Two female Gypsies executed. British Gypsies are shipped to the Caribbean as slaves.
- 1715 Scotland**  
Ten Gypsies deported to Virginia.
- 1768 England**  
The first modern circus is held in London.
- 1780 England**  
Anti-Gypsy legislation gradually repealed from this date.
- 1800s Britain**  
Fairs start to include mechanical rides, as they still do today.
- 1820s Britain**  
Tents start to be used for fairs under George IV.
- 1820 Britain**  
Specially-commissioned wooden caravans start being used for travel by showmen (Showmen's wagons).
- 1822 United Kingdom**  
Turnpike Act introduced: Gypsies camping on the roadside to be fined.

**1835 United Kingdom – Highways Act 1835**

This Act strengthened the provisions of the 1822 Turnpike Act. It became an offence to 'be a Gypsy encamping on the highway' which meant that under this legislation Gypsies on a verge or in a layby were committing an offence while a foreign or British tourist could park a caravan alongside without being summonsed. This Act was still being used until its repeal in 1980.

**1840s** Large groups of Irish Travellers arrive in mainland Britain due to 1840s famine in Ireland.

**1840 England**

Specially-commissioned wooden caravans start being used for travel by Romany Gypsies (*Gypsy vardos*).

**1880s England**

Agricultural depression in England. Many Travellers and Gypsies are poverty-stricken and move to urban squatters' areas. Hundreds of Irish Travellers leave Ireland for Britain.

**1889 Britain**

Showmen in Britain form the United Kingdom Van Dwellers Association, later called the Showmen's Guild, to fight the Moveable Dwellings Bill, which restricts travellers' movements.

**1908 England – The Children's Act**

Education is made compulsory for Travelling children in England by The Children's Act, but only for half the year.

**1930s Local Acts of Parliament**

Many local authorities were given additional powers against Gypsies under these local acts.

**1930s-60s**

Groups of European Roma come to live in Britain.

**1936 England – Public Order Act 1936**

An Act originally designed to cover anti-semitic propaganda. 'True' Romany Gypsies may be considered an ethnic group for the purposes of section 5A of this Act.

**1939 World War II**

In Britain, the government builds caravan camps for Gypsies serving in the forces or doing vital farm work. These are closed when the war finishes. In Germany, Roma, Sinti and other Gypsies are stripped of all human rights by the Nazis. As many as 600,000 are murdered in camps and gas chambers. Known by Roma as the *porrajmos* (the 'devouring'), the Roma holocaust in Europe.

**1942 Germany**

Central Security Office in Berlin started to collect information on the Gypsy population of England, in preparation for a planned invasion of Britain.

**1945 Britain**

Travellers start to use motor-drawn trailers, and some buy their own land to stop on.

**1947 England**

Committee set up by Norman Dodds, Labour MP, which included Gypsy and Gorgio members which drew up a nine-point Charter regarding Gypsy and Traveller needs in England and Wales.

**1954 United Kingdom – Convention on Stateless Persons (1954)**

The UK signed the Convention which states *The contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of stateless persons*. In practice the Home Office ignored this convention.

**1960 England and Wales – The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960**

The 1960 Caravan Sites Act made it illegal for any piece of land to be used as a caravan site without a licence – and a licence was unobtainable without planning permission. A Gypsy could not buy a piece of land and park his own caravan on it without first obtaining planning permission and then a site licence. Many Gypsies were also driven off private land by benevolent landowners now unable to obtain a site licence, and farmers using seasonal workers were fined under the same Act. Under section 24 of this Act, local authorities were given discretionary powers to provide caravan sites, but there was no mandatory duty. The aim was to regularise static caravan sites and raise standards for site residents through requirements for planning permission and site licences. Caravans were prohibited from common land. This led to a reduction in the number of places where Gypsies could stop. Some central funds were available to fund provision of sites, but by 1967 only 14 had been built.

**1960s** Mass evictions and public harassment of Gypsies and Travellers. Irish Government 'Commission on Itinerancy' begins a programme to assimilate Irish Travellers. Huge influx of Irish Travellers to mainland Britain.

**1960 Commons Act**

Camping on commons prohibited.

**1965 National Survey of Gypsies** took place which recorded 15,500 'Gypsies and other Travellers' (approximately 75% of the real number).

**1966 Britain**

Gypsy Council (Romany *Kris*) founded.

### **1968 England and Wales – Caravan Sites Act 1968**

This Act placed a duty on county councils and districts to provide accommodation for Gypsies 'residing in and resorting to' their areas. The Act required counties to assess the level of provision required, and to acquire the land. In Shire counties districts were responsible for the management of sites. If the Secretary of State deemed adequate provision to have been made, counties (and later individual districts) could apply to be 'designated'. This gave them increased powers to deal with illegal encampments. There was no time-scale given for local authorities to make provision, and some authorities failed to meet their obligations. The Secretary of State could direct a county to make adequate provision of sites but these powers were rarely used.

The 1968 Caravan Sites Act promised to provide a solution to the problem of not being allowed to stop, by providing official caravan sites for Gypsies, but this turned out to be an empty promise. The main provisions of the Act were that:

- a) County Councils had a duty to provide accommodation for Gypsies 'residing in and resorting to' their areas;
- b) a London Borough need not provide accommodation for more than 15 caravans;
- c) the Secretary of State for the Environment may direct any local authority requiring them to provide sites;
- d) an Area can be designated as an area in which Gypsies cannot station their caravans except if there are pitches free on the official site – it is a criminal offence to do so.

Problems arose almost immediately, because many Councils did not fulfil their obligations (and still haven't) to build the requisite number of sites, and those Councils that did, quickly provided the minimum number of pitches, based on inadequate counts of families in the area, and then claimed 'designated' status. Under the 1968 Act, 'designated' areas of the country are those where Gypsies cannot station a caravan on vacant land without committing a crime, making many areas of the country legally a Gypsy-free zone.

Those families who managed to secure a place on a site became legal, but hampered in their ability to travel and find work and those who didn't secure a pitch became automatically criminalised as there was nowhere for them to legally stop elsewhere. Not being able to stop without harassment and forced roadside evictions meant that economic adaptability became severely difficult, whilst many site regulations prohibit the carrying on of a trade or business on the site.

### **1968 England**

The NGEC (National Gypsy Education Council) was set up with a committee of Gypsy activists and educationalists. Lady Plowden became its first Chair.

### **1970 Britain**

People from the settled community start to take to the road and live in caravans. They are designated as 'New Age Travellers' in the media.

### **1970 Part 2 of the Caravan Sites Act** comes into operation.

Councils must provide sites for Gypsies. Largely ignored.

**1971 England**

First World Romani Congress held near London.

**Scotland**

Advisory Committee on the Travelling People starts work.

**1972 England**

Romani Guild founded.

**1976 The Race Relations Act 1976**

States that Gypsies and Travellers must not be discriminated against and they must be treated fairly. It creates a general duty on a wide range of public authorities, including the police service, to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; promote equality of opportunity, and promote good race relations between people of different racial groups. The Act requires local authorities to assess the impact of any proposed policies on all ethnic minorities; Romany Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic minority in 1989, and Irish Travellers in 2000.

**1977 England and Wales**

John Cripps appointed to study the workings of the 1968 Caravans Act, and to report on the way in which local authorities had ignored its provisions.

**1979 England**

To ensure adequate numbers of sites and monitor progress in meeting the provisions of the 1968 Act, a bi-annual count of Gypsy caravans and families was introduced in England in 1979. It is voluntary, although has a high return rate; 94% of authorities completed the relevant form in January 2003. The Count is based on two returns made by local authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister:

- GS1 is a count of the number Gypsy caravans, families, adults and children on unauthorised sites, authorised local authority sites and authorised private sites in each local authority area on specified dates in January and July. Numbers on unauthorised sites are split according to land-ownership (Gypsy owned land and other) and 'toleration' status (local authorities may 'tolerate' some unauthorised encampments in the sense that they will not take enforcement action).
- GS2 assess the provision of local authority Gypsy sites. This return requires details of the address, total number of pitches, type of pitches (residential and transit), total caravan capacity, and date of opening for all local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites at a specified date in January each year.

**1980 Local Government Act**

Incorporated many suggestions from the Cripps Report.

**1980** The offence of 'being a Gypsy encamping on a highway' is abolished.

**1980 Education Act**

Gypsies on illegal sites are entitled to a school place.

**1983 Mobile Homes Act**

This gives people who live on protected site extra protection from eviction. However, at present, local council sites for Gypsies and Travellers are not protected.

**1985 England**

Bradford's attempts to make it illegal for nomadic Gypsies to come within city limits overturned by the Courts.

**1986 Public Order Act 1986**

Statutory protection of Gypsy Travellers from racially motivated crimes in mainland UK. Trespass on vacant land becomes a criminal offence: reinforces law on racial harassment. There are further powers contained within the Act which have been utilised where there has been notification or awareness that large numbers of Gypsies or Travellers have intended encamping at identified locations. There are also powers regarding regulation and prohibition of assemblies, which can be enforced prior to or during the assembly if known when and where it is taking place.

**1988 Education Reform Act**

New fund for Traveller education.

**1989 Britain**

Romany Gypsies are first recognised as an ethnic minority.

**1990 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990)**

and

**1991 Planning and Compensation Act 1991**

Planning legislation is the main tool used to tackle unauthorised development on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers. Under the TCPA 1990, local planning authorities have a number of powers:

- a) Where an apparent breach of planning control has taken place, a planning contravention notice may be served requiring information regarding activities on the land or interests in the land.
- b) An enforcement notice may be served requiring that steps be taken to remedy a specified breach within a given period of time.
- c) Direct action may be taken where steps required by an enforcement notice have not been taken within the compliance period.
- d) A stop notice may be served which immediately stops any activity which contravenes planning control.
- e) A breach of condition notice may be served where a condition or limitation imposed through a planning permission is not complied with. There is no statutory right of appeal against a breach of condition notice.
- f) High Court or County Court injunctions may be served in order to restrain any actual or expected breach of planning control.
- g) Compulsory purchase can take place following authorisation from the Secretary of State.

In addition, local authorities have the option to take civil action for trespass in their capacity as landowners.

### 1993 Scotland

Scottish Gypsy Traveller Association set up.

### 1994 Britain – Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

This is the greatest blow to a nomadic way of life. Under this Act, the 1968 Caravan Sites Act is repealed, which means that councils are no longer obliged to build sites, and can close those already built. At the same time, it is now a criminal offence to stop on a roadside with six or more vehicles, which means that a maximum of two families (two caravans and two towing vehicles) can stop together. The powers given to 'designated' areas have been strengthened and now apply across the whole of England and Wales, against all caravans. Not moving after being asked to do so by a local council becomes a further criminal offence (Kenrick & Bakewell, 1995). This Act provides the police and local authorities with powers to tackle unauthorised encampments where no trespass is involved. Grant aid for the provision of sites was also withdrawn. Instead Travellers were encouraged to buy their own land. However, Barkham (2005) noted that over 90% of planning applications are refused as opposed to 20% of non-traveller applications.

As the Commission for Racial Equality has noted, 'Gypsies will have two choices: either to become house dwellers or to be criminalised for following a nomadic way of life.' The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act received Royal Assent in the U.K. in the same week as the Committee of Ministers signed a new Council of Europe framework convention on the protection of national minorities, linked to the European Convention on Human Rights (November 1994).

The main legislation contains police powers applicable to unauthorised encampment in the mainland UK, although use of the police powers is inconsistent throughout the UK. Additional powers are also provided in Section 62 of the Act, regarding seizure of vehicles from the land where the unauthorised encampment is located. Powers to prohibit trespassory assemblies have been used regarding large unauthorised encampments of Travellers on the grounds primarily of '*serious disruption to the life of the community*'. Use of the powers contained in the Act and other legislation may result in liability for civil wrongs arising under the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 or the Human Rights Act 1998, depending on the particular circumstances. There are several alternative procedures available to deal with unauthorised encampment dependent on individual circumstances including powers and offences contained within the Highway Acts, local byelaws and planning legislation.

An accompanying Department of the Environment circular, **Gypsy Sites Policy and Unauthorised Camping** recommended that local authorities consider adopting a policy of toleration and a more humane response towards unauthorised encampment, identifying wider obligations which Local Authorities may have to the travelling community.

### **Toleration policy**

The Department of the Environment and the Regions publication details considerations that should be made when considering toleration of unauthorised encampments. The current guidance suggests in the absence of specific welfare needs considerations regarding eviction should include the following:

- i) The nature, suitability or obtrusiveness of the encampment.
- ii) The size of the group, their behaviour and the level of nuisance.
- iii) The number, validity and seriousness of complaints.

When a decision is made not to evict, the period the encampment remains should be determined by the specific circumstances of the particular encampment and could include the following:

- a) The educational needs of the children.
- b) The recent birth of children.
- c) Where Gypsy Travellers wish to stay for a short period, and they are unlikely to cause disruption or damage during their stay, a negotiated date of departure may be appropriate which if exceeded may trigger eviction.
- d) Consideration should be made by authorities as to whether Gypsy Travellers should be referred to a more suitable nearby site.
- e) Other considerations include consultation with local planning authorities regarding the impact of particular unauthorised encampments.

Implementation of toleration policies is at present fragmented nationally.

### **1996 Housing Act 1996**

This Act defined a person as homeless if they have accommodation but:

- i. Cannot secure entry to it, or
- ii. It consists of a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is no place where he is entitled or permitted both to place it and to reside in it.

Consequently Gypsies on unauthorised sites are, by law, homeless. A target was set for local authorities in England to significantly increase accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers by 2011, though research commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2009) indicates that most local authorities are far from meeting this target.

### **1997 England**

Roma refugees from the Slovak Republic arrive in Dover in November/December seeking asylum and receive mainly negative reactions and hostility from local residents and the national news media.

### **1998 Human Rights Act**

This Act came into effect in October 2000 when provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights were incorporated into UK law. The Act makes it unlawful for a public authority to act in breach of Convention Rights unless it could not have acted differently under primary legislation. Any interference with a Convention Right must be proportionate to the objective in question and must not

be arbitrary, unfair or oppressive. Several Articles of the Act are important in relation to Gypsies and Travellers:

a) Article 1 states:

- i. Every natural person or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyments of his possessions.
- ii. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by the law and by the general principles of international law.

b) Article 8 states:

- i. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
- ii. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others.

In relation to Article 8 the European Court of Human Rights has held that, *occupation of [a] caravan is an integral part of [...] ethnic identity as a gypsy, reflecting the long tradition of that minority of following a travelling lifestyle. This is the case even though [...] many gypsies increasingly settle for long periods in one place [...].*"

Other Articles are also relevant:

- a) Article 2, the right not be denied access to education (this may be significant if eviction is considered by a local authority)
- b) Article 3, prohibiting inhuman or degrading treatment
- c) Article 11, freedom of peaceful assembly and association
- d) Article 14 refers to the right of prohibition of discrimination: *The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.*

Section 6 (1) states: *It is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with a Convention right.*

### **1998 Crime and Disorder Act**

Statutory protection of Gypsy Travellers from racially motivated specified in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in mainland United Kingdom.

### **2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

Irish Travellers recognised as an Ethnic Minority under Race Relations Act. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 states that public authorities must help all racial groups to be treated fairly.

## **2000 England**

Start of Gypsy-led protests at the ban of the 600-year-old fair at Horsemonden in Kent which are successful and the ban is finally lifted in 2006.

## **2001 Race Relations Act (Statutory Duties) Order 2001**

Additional specific duties are placed on public authorities already bound by the general duty. These specific duties will be imposed on individual public authorities by the Act in England and Wales, and by the **Race Relations Act (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2002** in Scotland.

## **2001 Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant**

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister introduced this Grant in 2001 to provide funding for refurbishment of existing local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites in England. £17 million was made available over three years to local authorities, who were required to bid for funds. The grant provided 75% of the total costs, with local authorities funding the remainder. For 2003/04 the grant was extended to allow local authorities to bid for funds to build temporary sites and emergency stopping places. A further two years' funding of £16 million was announced for 2004/5 and 2005/6.

## **2002 Homelessness Act 2002**

By July of 2003, all local authorities were required to develop housing strategies that reviewed and predicted levels of homelessness within the authority's area. The strategy is required to ensure there is sufficient accommodation for all homeless people in the area.

## **2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003**

On 26 July 2002, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Office issued a joint press release outlining the Government's new approach to tackling unauthorised camping, introducing stronger police powers to move unauthorised encampments provided there was adequate site provision. This Act provided the police with additional powers when a suitable pitch is available on a relevant site. A relevant site is defined as one within the same local authority area, although in a two-tier authority, the availability of a pitch would be on a county-wide basis. There is no definition of 'suitable pitch'. The powers of the Act may be used when:

- a) At least two people are trespassing;
- b) There is at least one vehicle;
- c) It appears that there are one or more caravans or;
- d) The trespassers are on the land for the purpose of residing there for any period of time.

In such circumstances, a police officer may direct trespassers to move off the land. However, the police and local authority are bound by the Human Rights Act and the local authority should first undertake a welfare check at the encampment. Efforts should be made to keep members of the encampment together; where this is not possible, dependant members of the encampment should not be separated.

### **2003 Wales**

In May 2003 the Welsh Assembly Equality of Opportunity Committee published its "Review of Service provision for Gypsies and Travellers". It recommended that *there should be a duty to provide, or facilitate the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and that this should be supported by additional funding.*

### **2004 Guidance on Managing Unauthorised Camping**

In February 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Office published guidance on managing unauthorised camping. It identifies a number of principles to be followed in managing unauthorised camping. The principles involved are:

- a) To enforce the same standards of behaviour by unauthorised campers as are expected of the settled community.
- b) To respond rapidly to any deterioration of behaviour and growing disruption from an encampment.
- c) To facilitate access to services for Gypsy and Travellers on encampments.
- d) To keep all parties informed of decisions and actions.

### **2004 Housing Act**

A statutory requirement is introduced under section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 that there should be an accommodation needs assessment of all Gypsies and Travellers, which is then included in housing plans. The Needs Assessments in some areas were very poor to start with but have improved over time.

### **2005 Britain**

The Sun newspaper launches its 'Stamp on the Camps' campaign against Gypsies and Travellers. The Conservatives try to get re-elected by targeting Gypsies' supposed flouting of planning laws.

### **2006 Britain**

BBC starts Rokker Radio, the first programme for Gypsies and Travellers in its history (discontinued in 2008).

### **2006 Circular 01/2006 Planning For Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites**

Planning guidance issued. There has been an increase in site provision through the planning system, but the majority of these are only temporary permissions whilst the new regional planning system, Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS's) gets under way. In the meantime, some districts and boroughs are objecting to providing pitches even though the identified numbers are very small compared to housing provision.

### **2007 The Showman circular**

Issued as many local authorities ignored the fact that Showmen should also have their needs assessed. The majority of the early assessments did not include Showmen. Showman families have a tradition of travelling and living in caravans for centuries and have their own planning circular, Circular 04/2007 Planning for Travelling Show people.

**2008 Britain**

Britain celebrates the first Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. In Italy, Roma camps are firebombed by neo-nazis. Scottish Gypsy Travellers are recognised as an ethnic minority for the first time.

**2008** A Bill was launched by Chris Johnson (Community Law Partnership) to promote security of tenure for local authority Gypsy caravan sites. During the Housing and Renovation Bill, the clause that made local authority sites exempt from the 1983 Mobile Homes Act was removed.

**2010 Equality Act**

Places a duty on public authorities to stop prejudice; ensure equality; encourage good relations between different groups.

**2011 Annual Census**

For the first time the Annual Census categorised Romanies (including Roma) and Irish Travellers as distinct ethnic groups.

**2011 Coalition Government Policy on Gypsies and Travellers**

Under the current Coalition Government there is a move towards decentralising the planning system for Traveller sites with the aim of giving local councils the responsibility for determining the appropriate level of site provision (Communities and Local Government 2011).

The Rowntree Charitable Trust has provided funding to the Travellers Aid Trust (TAT) to look at the impact of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill on Gypsies and Travellers. TAT (a Wales-based UK-wide organisation) facilitated a Panel Review to provide a platform to bring together a wide range of stakeholders, enabling them to share their wealth of knowledge and experience in this area. The convened Panel was composed of a range of politicians from the main political parties and a number of established academics and legal experts. In February 2011 the Panel heard evidence from local government, other service providers, the police and Gypsies and Travellers themselves.

Discussion centred on the four key themes of:

- a) Site Delivery
- b) Empowerment and Localism
- c) Community Cohesion and Fairness
- d) Social Inclusion

The final Report represents a series of recommendations to determine means by which Government proposals can be strengthened and made more effective in terms of site delivery and social inclusion. The report also considers the potential impact of NHS reforms on initiatives to improve the health and reduce inequalities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

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## 7.0 ARRIVING IN WALES

The Roma who came to Britain spoke at least two different dialects of their language and called themselves by two different names, *Romanichal* and *Kalé*. The Romanichal travelled mainly in England, and the *Kalé* eventually decided upon Wales. It was the latter dialect that became 'the dialect of the Gypsies of Wales'. The most likely entry point for the *Kalé* was via Spain, France, crossing to Cornwall, and then to the Welsh borders and various towns in Wales.

There were many different family groups that traversed England and Wales, but the family that became renowned in Wales for its tri-lingualism and musicianship was the *Teulu Abram Wood* (family of Abram Wood) and its descendants, in particular the family of John Roberts of Newtown. Abram Wood became the 'father' of generations of music makers. Originally each Gypsy family restricted its wanderings to an established and well-defined circuit which, in the case of the Woods, must originally have included the whole of Wales. The Woods were apparently the first Gypsies to adopt Wales as their home, but as other families followed them they tended to limit their wanderings to north Wales. Also travelling in north Wales were the Lee, Lovell and Ingram families, whilst the Locks preferred the Welsh Borders. In south Wales the families were mainly Romanichal from England.

It is probable that Abram Wood and his family entered Wales from the Somerset region as a small group of closely related individuals during the later part of the seventeenth century, or earlier part of the eighteenth century, and certainly before 1760. They travelled on foot and used mules or donkeys to carry their possessions in large leather saddle-packs. As the years passed they were accepted as part of the background of rural life in north Wales because of their contribution to the social life of the community. A living was made from harp and fiddle playing; horse dealing; basket making; wood cutting; peg, net and lace making; fishing and fortune telling. On their travels they usually slept in barns, or sometimes tents. They helped farmers with harvest work and provided amusement in the evenings with their fiddles and harps. *Those who followed barns used to call gentlemen's houses with the harps, and used to be called in and make a good thing of it.* (John Roberts)

## Timeline in Wales

**1579** Earliest recorded reference to Gypsies in Wales – the Sheriffe of the countie of Radnor 'apprehended the number of xl<sup>tie</sup> vagrant personnes, terming themselves Egiptiens'.

### Late 16<sup>th</sup> century

Morris Kyffin refers to *siapsach a gweflau sipswn* in a cywydd (strict-metre rhyming couplets).

Siôn Tudur in an englyn met 'a great Gibbsie of an Alehouse, in St Asaph' (a female, apparently Welsh-speaking).

Hityn Grydd in an englyn mentions 'A number of Gibbsies or counterfeight Egiprians came to Wreccsam'.

**1676** Earliest estimated date for the arrival of Abram Wood and his family. 'He brought with him a violin, and he is supposed to be the first one that ever played upon one in Wales.' (John Roberts, great-grandson of Abram, 1876)

**1700** Estimated date for the arrival of Gypsies in Llanidloes (who adopted the local gentry name 'Ingram') and in Carmarthen (who adopted the local gentry name 'Wood').

**1703** Ellis Wynne refers to 'a pack of hungry gipsies' and 'twenty demons ... which turned out to be gipsies' in *Gweledigaethau y Bardd Cwsg* (The Visions of the Sleeping Bard).

**1715** Baptism of 'Bohemia, the son of Abraham Wood, as supposed King of ye Gypsyes, of froom, in Co. Somerset' registered at Selattyn.

**1730** Latest estimated date for the arrival of Abram Wood and his family.

**1760** Baptism record of 'Solomon the son of Abram Wood ... a vagrant' at Llangernyw. This is the first record of the family that became known in Wales as *Teulu Abram Wood* and which produced many generations of musicians.

**1770** John Walters in *An English-Welsh Dictionary* (1770-94) stated that *Gypsy* was 'corrupted from *Egyptian*' and signified 'a vagabond of tawny complexion, who pretends to tell fortunes, &c.'

**1785** Burial of Sarah Wood 'a travelling woman' at Selattyn.

**1787** The play *Pleser a Gofid* (Pleasure and Grief) by Thomas Edwards/Twm o'r Nant has a Gypsy character called Aunty Sal from south Wales. This play includes the first portrait of a Gypsy in Welsh literature and the earliest literary allusion to Abram Wood, founder of the principal family of Welsh Gypsies.

**1796** Thomas Pennant in *The History of the Parishes of Whiteford and Holywell* states '... in some distant time a gang of gipsies used to haunt this dingle, and that eighteen of them were executed, after which the gipsey race never more frequented the neighbourhood' [Whitford in Flint].

- 1799** Burial of 'Abram Wood, a travelling Gypsy' at Llangelynnin.
- 1822** Gwallter Mechain in his *Journal and Diary* observed that 'formerly there were two Branches of Gypsies perambulating Wales – one of the surname Woods, the other of Ingram'.
- 1823** A letter in *Seren Gomer* (February) includes a list of Romani words and their Welsh equivalents spoken by the *Shipswnt* 'who have lived in our country for ages' and the writer comments on their 'proneness to live in tents'.
- 1823** *Seren Gomer* (May) reports on a band of Gypsies camped near Monmouth who 'practised their cheating tricks of reading fortunes, and increasing riches, &c.'
- 1826** *Seren Gomer* (August) reports that a farmer's wife in Carmarthenshire was persuaded by a Gypsy woman to part with over sixty pounds in the hope of gaining five thousand. The sixty pounds disappeared along with the Gypsy.
- 1832** A poem by Absalom Roberts, *Ar Ffolineb Swyn-Gyfaredd, a phob Ofergoelion Eraill* (On the Folly of Sorcery, and all other Superstitions) describes a visit to a Gypsy by two ladies to have their fortunes told.
- 1923** *The Life and Opinions of Robert Roberts, a Wandering Scholar, as told by himself* is the autobiography of a clergyman which includes reminiscences of his great-grandmother from Tynyfownog (Llangernyw in west Clwyd). These describe how the family of Abram Wood first came into the country, a 'wild lot' who built themselves a *tŷ tywyrch* (turf house) on the common and made baskets or brooms and fished and hunted hares. Robert Roberts' grandfather relates that he and a cousin decided to inspect the turf cottage where the Gypsies still lived and found them 'making merry, feasting and entertaining other company with their fiddles'.
- 1957** The relationship between Welsh and Romany cultures seems always to have been a close one. A showman's wagon (labelled a Gypsy caravan) was one of the very few artefacts to appear at the Welsh Folk Museum in Iorwerth Peate's time (founder of the Welsh Folk Museum) and with his blessing which was not 100 per cent Welsh.
- 1968** Iorwerth Peate wrote in the *Handbook of the Welsh Folk Museum* of the 'colourful' contribution that the Gypsies had made to Welsh life.

All of Abram's four children took spouses from other families (some Gypsy, some Welsh) and of Abram's twenty grandchildren, nine married Welsh spouses, while eight married their cousins. These opposing tendencies continued into the twentieth century, by which time marriage within the family among Abram's descendants had virtually ceased. This was the process whereby the Woods were very gradually integrated into the community among which they lived. The Romani language began to be neglected in favour of Welsh. As the language died, so the characteristic Romany features began to fade and change.

The history of the Welsh Gypsies during the twentieth century has been that of their gradual absorption into society in general, their ever-widening dispersal, and consequently a weakening of their sense of separateness and identity as a community. From dwelling in tents and inhabiting barns, the families moved to renting cottages for the winter months and travelling in the spring-autumn months. Some of those who moved into houses sought to satisfy their wanderlust by moving at intervals from house to house, following a circuit of the north Wales towns of Caernarfon, Machynlleth, Bala and Newtown. Such migrants from domicile to domicile were regarded with disfavour by the true itinerants of the road, who labelled them 'house-Gypsies'. But the process of integration was well underway by the 1880s, by which time the Woods and Ingrams were all settled in houses.

Religion also took hold, in particular of John Roberts of Newtown. It had played little part in his early life, but he later became a devout and staunch member of the Church in Newtown ... two of his sons became lay preachers.

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Sources: Ingram<sup>[G]</sup>, 2012; Jarman<sup>[G]</sup>, 1991; Roberts<sup>[G]</sup>, 1981

## 8.0 LANGUAGE AND MUSIC

In England the Romani language lived on until the nineteenth century, but was dying out and rare to find by 1875. In its place a form of speech emerged called *pogadi chib* ('broken language'). This used Romani words but English grammar and word order. This was used as a contact language between Romanies and other travellers, and amongst themselves as a spoken-only language separate from English. This Anglo-Romani is still used today by many families and has been adopted to some extent by Irish Travellers.

In Wales the *Kalé* dialect, having lost contact with its cousin in England, continued to be used as a spoken-only pure dialect with its own grammar. This wasn't really discovered until 1894 and it was believed that pure Romani had died out in Britain. Meanwhile in Europe, *Romanés* was being used as a spoken and written language. However, H. Francis Jones, in the *North Wales Weekly News* in 1932, wrote: *But what gained for Teulu Abram Wood the deepest respect and affection of the Welsh people was their interest in our national music.*

The principal source of knowledge of Abram Wood and his family is Dr. John Sampson, a Romani scholar from Liverpool University. He spoke Romani fluently (gained from European Roma) and had studied the customs and remnants of the language of the English Gypsies. In his preface to the *Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales* (1926) he writes:

*'... in the summer of 1894, when on a caravan tour through north Wales, I chanced on a Welsh Gypsy harper at Bala, and made the discovery that the ancient Romani tongue, so long extinct in England and Scotland, had been miraculously preserved by the Gypsies of the Principality ... and the dialect so religiously kept intact in the fastnesses of Cambria is thus a survival of the oldest and purest form of British Romani.'*

Edward Wood, the Gypsy harper discovered by Sampson, *'was trilingual, and spoke Romani, English, and Welsh with equal facility – indeed it was on his own knowledge of the latter tongue*

*that he especially prided himself, speaking it (as has been recorded) like one of the old-fashioned Welsh gentlefolk'. Edward was known as 'Telynor Meirion' and played before King Edward VII (when Prince of Wales) at Ruthin Castle, and before Queen Victoria at Palé Hall in 1889. In 1929 Professor J. Glyn Davies writes that the Woods 'must have been able to speak Welsh of the "puritan" class, with its strict taboos on slovenly expressions, clipped words, redundancies and noisy voice. Both Edward Wood and Matthew Wood prided themselves on such Welsh. They spoke it beautifully like old fashioned gentle folk.'* He queries whether this was originally the Welsh of substantial and well-bred folk in the late eighteenth century. He also writes in 1952 of Edward's 'extensive knowledge of harp melodies and folk-tunes'.

By 1896 Sampson had discovered several other members of the Wood family who were all able to speak Welsh and English, but who used Romani as their mother tongue. Sampson took a cottage at Bettws Gwerfil Goch and began collecting the samples of Romani language and folk-tales that were to make up the bulk of his studies. At a local inn his 'evenings are enlivened with harp playing and singing. Matthew [Wood], for my delectation, has produced an old fiddle and, with true Gypsy ingenuity, has improvised a bow from an ash plant and hairs plucked from the tail of a cart horse.'

A colleague of Sampson at Liverpool University, Professor Kuno Meyer, wrote in the *Liverpool Mercury* in 1896:

*Some time ago, in a paper read before a literary society at Caernarvon, I spoke of the existence in Wales of a trilingual race – the Welsh Gypsies ... who constantly employ three languages so widely differing in structure and vocabulary as Romanés, Welsh, and English, speak a better English than the average Welshman, and a much purer and correcter Romanés than their English relations. [...] In Wales, just as in Hungary and Russia, this gifted race have become the best interpreters of the national music of their adopted country. Both on the old triple harp and its modern rival, the pedal harp, they seem to me to excel by infusing into Celtic music something of the spirit of magic which is commonly attributed to their race.*

Valentine Wood (son of Abram) was the first of the Woods to take up harp-playing, during the 1770s. William, another son, was a 'sweet violin player'. Solomon, another son, held evenings of mirth and festivity at his cottage – the Woods began to take houses to live in during the winter months, resuming their wanderings in the summer months. Jeremiah, another son, was known as 'Jerry Bach Gogerddan' a famous performer on the triple harp, harpist to the Price family of Gogerddan for over fifty years. Descendants of these four sons mostly all went on to become well-known harpers, fiddlers, singers and dancers.

Ernest Roberts<sup>[G]</sup> (1981) describes the Gypsy style of harp playing as 'essentially emotional, rhythmical and melodious and to achieve it they frequently resorted to improvisation ... bringing to it a personal involvement and panache'. An 'inventive and spontaneous style' characterised their violin playing. When speaking of his great-grandfather John Roberts he writes: *Like the Gypsies of other European countries, notably Hungary and Spain, who took over the national musical instruments of the countries in which they had made their homes, he, his sons and grandson had taken over the national instrument of Wales, bringing to it a unique style of playing.*

John Roberts himself wrote in 1889: *A pure Welsh harper (one who has love for his country) ought to be well versed with the history of his country – and to be acquainted with the mountains, valleys, Rocks, Rivers, Dingles and Dales – so as to be able to give a true sound to his national music – he ought to have a smile on his Face, or a Tear in his Eye ... to express those ideas.*

### **Timeline of Welsh Gypsy music**

- 1735** Welsh traditional music declined with the rise of Nonconformist religion which began at Talgarth in 1735, which emphasised choral singing over instruments, and religious over secular uses of music; traditional musical styles became associated with drunkenness and immorality. The development of hymn singing in Wales is closely tied with the Welsh Methodist revival of the late eighteenth century. The hymns were popularised by writers such as William Williams, while others were set to popular secular tunes or adopted Welsh ballad tunes.
- 1780s** The appointment of Henry Mills as a musical overseer to the Welsh Methodist congregations saw a drive to improve singing throughout Wales. This saw the formation of local musical societies and in the first half of the nineteenth century collections of tunes were printed and distributed.
- 1797** The oil painting 'Fair Day, Aberystwyth, 1797' by Samuel Ireland shows the harp and fiddle as dominating popular music-making, despite the antagonism of religious revivalists. The original is at the Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans.
- 1815** William Wood (son of Abram) had four daughters and the youngest of these, Sarah, married a Welshman, John Robert Lewis of Pentrefoelas. They were the parents of John Roberts of Newtown. The father of John Robert Lewis (Robert Lewis) was known throughout the locality as *Yr Hen Baledwr Penffair* (the old fairground ballad singer), so John Roberts of Newtown inherited music from both sides of his family.
- 1816** John Roberts, Telynor Cymru (Harpist of Wales), born at Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch. Travelled with the family as a child, living in tents and barns.
- 1826** John Wood Jones (taught by his father Valentine and Richard Roberts of Caernarfon) gained the silver harp at the Brecon Eisteddfod. Richard Roberts benefited from the tutoring of a long line of harpers who derived their art from the ancient harpers of Wales. John Wood Jones therefore took his place among the 'ancient harpers' and was the first Wood to perform before the royal family.
- 1823** Benjamin Wood Jones (John's brother) competed on the harp at the Carmarthen Eisteddfod playing *Nos Calan*. The earliest reference to a Wood family member in an eisteddfod.
- 1830** John Roberts enlisted as a drummer in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. After enlisting he learned to read music and to play various instruments in the military band,

concentrating on the harp. He became skilled at arranging old Welsh airs for different instruments.

- 1834** John Roberts performed before Princess Royal Victoria at Portsmouth.
- 1835** John Roberts performed before Princess Royal Victoria twice at Winchester.
- 1839** John Roberts left the army and returned home to marry. *The people of the neighbourhood soon came to know that I came home, and a great many visited our camp, some of the highest; and I had to play my harp for them to dance upon the green, and they made me a very great welcome.* John and his wife had thirteen children, including nine sons who were all musicians, playing harp, flagelot, piccolo, viol and violin.
- 1842** Unable to afford a harp, John Roberts set out to win one. He won the Tredegar prize harp at Abergavenny Eisteddfod.
- 1843** John Wood Jones accompanied Carnhuanawc and Thomas Gruffydd on a visit to Buckingham Palace to present a triple harp to the Prince of Wales. The two harpists played before the royal family and Queen Victoria. He became domestic harper to Sir Benjamin Hall of Llanover.
- 1844** For the next six years John Roberts and his wife Eleanor entertained with harp, fiddle, tambourine and singing and dancing at village halls, inns and gentry houses. Eleanor also told fortunes.
- 1847** A group of Gypsy violin players from the Lee family played at a fair in Llanfyllin.
- 1847** John Roberts performed before the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia at Aberswyth.
- 1848** John Roberts performed before the King of the Belgians at Swansea.
- 1848** John Roberts won first prize for harp-playing at Abergavenny Eisteddfod.
- 1850** John Roberts won first prize for triple harp-playing at Cardiff Eisteddfod.
- 1850** Mary Ann Roberts (John Roberts' daughter, aged ten) won a prize at Rhuddlan Royal Eisteddfod for harp-playing.
- 1854** Congregational singing was given further impetus with the arrival of the temperance movement, which saw the Temperance Choral Union organising annual singing festivals; these included hymn singing by combined choirs.
- 1855** John Roberts issued a challenge in *Bell's Life in London*:  
*John Roberts, Welsh harpist & violinist, Newtown, will play any man upon the above two instruments for £5 or £50. Any party accepting the above challenge must be*

*thoroughly acquainted with the ancient music for the Welsh harp and operatic music for the violin.* There is no record of the challenge being taken up.

- 1858** Mary Ann Roberts won a gold medal at Llangollen Eisteddfod for singing and harp-playing. Also a prize for a solo performance on the triple harp.
- 1859** The publication of *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* by Ieuan Gwyllt provided congregations with a body of standard tunes that were less complex with unadorned harmonies. This collection began the practice of combining together to sing tunes from the book, and laid the foundation for hymn singing festivals (Cymanfa Ganu).
- 1859** John and Mary Ann Roberts performed before the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, the Earl and Countess Vane and 'other distinguished persons'.
- 1860s** A revival of traditional Welsh music began, with the formation of the National Eisteddfod Society, followed by the foundation of Welsh Societies in London.
- 1861** A visiting musician to a performance by John and Mary Ann Roberts at Aberystwyth commented that their manner of playing and singing was *'the only legitimate performance we have now of the style in which the ancient bards must have played – free from all the meretricious aids of the modern school'*.
- 1865** Lloyd Wynn (son) won chief prize for harp-playing at Aberystwyth National Eisteddfod.
- 1868** John Roberts secured a testimonial from Ceiriog, the most popular Welsh lyric poet of the time. By request, John Roberts played the harp for Ceiriog when he lay on his deathbed in 1887.
- 1877** Charles Leland (American folklorist) met Matthew Wood in Aberystwyth and joined him at a wayside inn where *'A quart of ale, and the fiddle was set going ... Then the girl danced solo ... to her brother's fiddling ... he proceeded to pour forth the balance of his thoughts, if he had any, into the music of his violin.'*
- 1877** John Roberts formed his family of musicians into the Original Cambrian Minstrels, playing English pedal harps, Welsh triple harps, flageolet, double bass, violincello and violin. Tours were undertaken with the instruments loaded onto a horse-drawn four-wheeled dray.
- 1878** Albert Roberts (son) *'Telynor Hafren'* won the competition harp at Llanrwst Eisteddfod. He also gained the bardic title *Pencerdd y Delyn Deir-rhes* (Chief harpist on the triple-string harp) – date unsure. Famous for his variations on Welsh airs.
- 1879** Summer tour of the Roberts Family, with one son stopping off en route to play harp to the Officers' Mess in Welshpool.
- 1879** Mr & Mrs Proctor of Aberhafesp Hall engaged the family to play as a band twice a week during the summer. Other gentry clients included the Kinmell Family (St Asaph);

Lord Sudley (Gregynog); the Earl of Powys (Powys Castle); the Earl of Denbigh ('Downing'); Lady Llanover (Llanover Court, Abergavenny); Sir John Bailey (Glanwsk).

- 1879** A folk-tale written in Romani by John Roberts appeared in full in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.
- 1880** *In Gipsy Tents* published by Francis Hides Groome, husband of John Roberts' niece, including tales and reminiscences from John Roberts.
- 1881** John Roberts and son Albert played, and Charles Wood sang, before the Empress of Austria at Combermere Abbey, Whitchurch.
- 1882** John Roberts and seven sons gave a performance in a cavern near Builth. When the River Severn froze in Newtown the Robertses would play for the skaters whilst chestnuts were roasted on braziers on the river bank.
- 1884** John Roberts was invested with the bardic title 'Telynor Cymru' (Harpist of Wales) at Glan Geirionydd. Before this he was known as 'Alaw Elwy' (bardic name).
- 1889** John Roberts and nine sons, plus Edward Wood (Telynor Meirion), all played on harps before Queen Victoria at Palé Hall, Llandderfel. John Roberts also performed penillion singing, and a quintet of five brothers played two harps simultaneously.
- 1894** John Roberts died aged seventy-eight at Newtown. His sons continued to function as a band of harpists for several years after his death, but gradually the customs of hiring harpists by the gentry came to an end. His sons continued to earn a living as solo performers.
- 1896** Publication of Nicholas Bennett's *Alawon fy Ngwlad* (Tunes of my Land), a compilation of traditional tunes and Welsh airs which included a biography of John Roberts.
- 1899** Francis Hides Groome in *Gypsy Folk-Tales* writes of John Roberts: *I know of no other instance where the teller of folk-tales has also been able himself to transcribe them.* This is referring to John's ability to read and write in English, Welsh and Romani and his enormous ability as a storyteller.
- 1904** John Robert's sons came together as a band once more to play before the King and Queen at Elan Valley.
- 1913** Cornelius and Adolphus Wood made a living as wandering musicians playing homemade box fiddles.
- 1931** Three generations of the Romani-descended Roberts clan temporarily revived the old musical inter-relationship of harp and fiddle in Wales to play at the funeral of gypsiologist Dr. John Sampson on the slopes of Y Foel Goch mountain.

**1932** William Roberts (son of John Roberts) played the harp with the Eugene Magyar Band at a Royal Command concert at the London Palladium, and gave nightly performances as harpist and violinist at the Phoenix Theatre.

**1949** Howel Wood clog-danced on a table in the film *The Last Days of Dolwyn*. His obituary in 1967 described him as *A Fiddler, Dancer and Fisherman. His contribution on the fiddle was his own music, the clog dance was his own special creation, or that of his family ...*

John Roberts was not the first of the descendants of Abram Wood to adopt the harp as a mode of livelihood, but he was the first to organize the exercise of his craft on a firm and business-like family basis. For many years, under the title of 'The Roberts Family' or 'The Cambrian Minstrels', he and his sons were widely known and acclaimed throughout the whole of north Wales, and much of south Wales. Their livelihood was not dependent solely on popular support, with the landed gentry encouraging music, and visits to gentlemen's houses as musical entertainers were frequent.

However, following his death the decline in Welsh Gypsy music began. It is known that his son Reuben taught the harp to *his* son, Ernest France, who served in the South African War as Regimental Harpist with the South Wales Borderers. Ernest in turn taught the harp to his daughter, Eldra Jarman. Neither of Eldra's daughters took up harp playing, although Eldra did teach her grandson to play. He does not play professionally or in public, however, and there seems to be no other descendant of the Wood or Roberts family who continues the Welsh Gypsy harp-playing tradition.

The leading exponent today of the Welsh triple harp is Robin Huw Bowen<sup>[NG]</sup>. After meeting Eldra on a television chat show in 1991, he asked if she would teach him her style of harp playing. Unknown to him, Eldra had been searching for someone suitable to pass on her music to, and finally agreed to teach Robin. She taught him by ear, harp-to-harp, and Robin remembers after he had mastered one particularly difficult piece, Eldra said: 'Very good. You've learnt the notes. Now you just need to learn the music.' By this she meant the spirit that needed to be invested in the music, the soul and verve brought to Welsh music by the Gypsy style of playing. Robin confirms that, to his knowledge, there are no remaining Welsh Gypsy musicians as John Roberts' descendants gradually dissipated throughout Wales, England and overseas. Robin (and his pupils) remain the only exponents of the Gypsy style of playing and he is called upon to provide music and perform at Gypsy-related events, television programmes and in memory of Eldra.

Meredydd Evans<sup>[NG]</sup>, a respected Welsh folk music expert, has spent a great deal of time with Gypsies in Wales and confirms that he only ever knew them to play Welsh songs with their own variations. They played harp and fiddle, didn't sing or compose, and played Welsh songs in their own style. There were other Gypsy musicians in Wales from time to time, but apart from the Wood/Roberts family 'nothing really serious'. Meredydd believes that the main contribution to Wales of the Gypsies was to keep alive Welsh folk music, as they continued to play and dance in remote barns throughout the Welsh Methodist prohibition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He does not believe there are any Gypsy musicians in Wales today.

Sam Lee<sup>[G]</sup> is a musician from an English Gypsy background who is researching and documenting the music and stories of the Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities. In Wales he has found Irish Travellers who are 'exceptionally musical and sing without instruments slow, long, ornamental, beautiful songs'. But these are personal and family songs, of academic interest only, and they would not be performed outside the family setting. He has not found any Romany Gypsy musicians in Wales and believes that any descendants of the Wood/Roberts family (of which there must be many) have either been absorbed into mainstream society and are not self-identifying as Gypsy, are not musicians, or have moved away from Wales. He remains ever-hopeful of finding a genuine Gypsy musician in a pub one day.

Andrée Morgan Andrews<sup>[G]</sup> knows of musicians with a Gypsy background (such as Albert Lee in Eric Clapton's backing band) but confirms that any music or singing within her community is a private and family affair, and not for public consumption.

*The story of Abram Wood and his clan of Welsh Gypsies is now a richly coloured thread running through the tapestry of the social and cultural history of eighteenth and nineteenth century Wales* (Roberts, 1981), but the thread seems to have reached its natural end. European Roma who work in a nationally-defined musical genre are not recognised as Roma/Gypsy at all, and similarly Gypsies in Wales have dispersed and/or melted into the Welsh host background. The musical heritage of the English Romanichals has become almost wholly absorbed as 'folk music'. By contrast, Edinburgh University's Centre for Scottish Studies has an unrivalled archive of recordings from Scottish Gypsy-Traveller singers.

Aside from Robin Huw Bowen there are a number of non-Gypsy musicians in Wales who play 'Gypsy style' music, such as: Billy Thompson, Los Amigos, Clerorfa, Carwyn Fowler (Towyn), Heulwen Thomas, and Five Go Swing. The Devil's Violin performs a mix of traditional music and storytelling, 'inspired by the passion and energy of the Gypsy tradition, including long-forgotten Gypsy tales from Wales'. All of the interviewees (on the list below) were asked, but not one could identify a professional musician in Wales today with Gypsy ancestry.

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Sources: Ingram<sup>[G]</sup>, 2012; Jarman<sup>[G]</sup>, 1991; Roberts<sup>[G]</sup>, 1981; Sampson, 1926; various interviewees, 2012

## **9.0 PROGRESS AND THE CURRENT POSITION**

### **9.1 Wales leading the way**

Wales is currently at the forefront of progressive thinking and action on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues in the UK. This has come about due to a convergence of academic interests, practical activism, individual determination, legal initiatives and political will – particularly in Cardiff – that has spread across the country in recent decades.

In the 1970s a voluntary school for Gypsy children was set up by the late Grace Edwards (mother of Julie Morgan, AM) at East Moors, and St David's Gypsy School became the basis for Gypsy and Traveller education in Cardiff. The school was free to attend and followed a progressive system (i.e. it was not formally structured) with teachers from a voluntary Gypsy

Support Group offering their services free of charge. Children were taken on trips, on visits to the park, etc. and were collected from Rover Way site. A bus was provided by Save the Children, and petrol was paid for by the local authority, but other than this, mainstream resources were not available to St David's and there was little formal integration with the mainstream education system. The aims of the school were: (i) *To advance the education of the children of Travellers (Gypsies) for whom attendance at a permanent school is not possible for whatever cause by the provision of a school and teaching in basic literacy and numeracy.* (ii) *To provide safe and satisfying play facilities for those Gypsy children under school age.*

Parents were concerned as the children were not necessarily being taught to read and write, but a local primary school provided separate classes for Gypsies and Travellers at the same time as St David's School was operating and treated the children in a very patronising manner. For example, the children's clothes would be taken from them and washed. This simply resulted in the clothes being destroyed by the family as they were then considered *mochadi*, and this was not the way forward. St David's School was therefore preferred by parents, despite its lack of formal education, to the option of the *mochadi* primary school.

This resulted in the local authority appointing a Home School Liaison Officer, whose job was to mainstream Gypsy and Traveller education, based on an integrated approach. The plan was that the Traveller Education Service would provide in-class support, based on a Gypsy or Traveller teacher and assistant working alongside teachers in the classroom. This supported the mainstream education approach and worked reasonably well whilst children were in primary education. It became more difficult to persuade parents to allow children to continue into secondary education, and this remains the case. Parents distrust the potential exposure to sex, drugs, cultural and *mochadi* issues in secondary education, and school also conflicts with the Romani tradition of taking on adult roles early in life. Children are considered adult at the age of ten, when their training for an economic adult life begins within the family, and they tend to marry around the age of sixteen. As a result, 90 per cent of Gypsies and Travellers over the age of twenty-five have limited reading and writing skills. Women over the age of eighteen who do work outside the home (around 20-30 per cent in Cardiff) are in low-paid, unskilled jobs. Girls who do not work outside the home are expected to learn the skills of family care and home-making from the age of ten, ready for their marriage at an early age.

From the impetus of St David's Gypsy School and the Gypsy support group that it engendered, a variety of interests began to converge and Cardiff became the focal point for a number of initiatives and reports (including a number of 'firsts') that advanced GRT causes in Wales. These included:

- 1977**            *Welsh Office Circular 51/77 - Caravan Sites Act 1968 - Part II: Gypsy Caravan Sites*, Welsh Office (March 1977)
  
- 1978**            *Welsh Office Circular 97/78 - Accommodation for Gypsies: Report by Sir John Cripps*, Welsh Office (August 1978)
  
- 1981**            Cardiff City Council appointed its first Gypsy Liaison Officer, Tim Wilson, and the Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project was founded. The duty conferred on local authorities by the 1968 Caravan Sites Act meant that the county council had to

provide the sites, and the city council was obliged to manage them. The long-standing use of Rover Way as an unregulated Gypsy site had reduced it to a pitiful state, and it was realised that liaison was needed in order to build a local authority site that could be regulated and maintained. Representatives from third sector organisations, Cardiff University and interested academics, councillors, local residents and Gypsy and Traveller groups came together with the newly-appointed liaison officer to discuss development of Rover Way site. Tim Wilson had a great deal of previous experience from Gypsy site management in Hertfordshire and managed the development of the site at Rover Way in the 1980s, and the development of the site at Shirenewton in the 1990s. The extent and quality of consultation between the local authority and Gypsy and Traveller families led to Shirenewton becoming the largest local authority site in Europe, and Cardiff City Council being seen as a pioneer of good practice in site development.

**1985** The expectation that children should move out of formal education as they reach secondary school age and learn about their role as a Gypsy/Traveller was referred to in the Swann report 1985 *Education for All: The report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*.

**1988** In January 1988 a group of Travellers, civil liberty campaigners and solicitors came together and formally set up The Travellers Aid Trust as a registered charity. The two main objectives of the charity are:

- The relief of poverty, hardship, sickness and distress among such persons as adopt, whether temporarily or permanently and regardless of race, culture, nationality or ethnic origins, a nomadic style or habit of life (herein after referred to as 'Travellers').
- The advancement of education among the children of Travellers by attendance at school or otherwise.

Following a dormant period in the 1990s the charity was revived in 2000 and is the only independent grant-maker dedicated specifically to supporting Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, based in Carmarthen.

The objectives of the Trust are: (i) Developing and delivering a range of small or targeted grants programmes aimed at benefiting individual Travellers and the Traveller community. These grants programmes are either funded by the Trust's own asset or through grants from other grant makers. (ii) Working with other grant makers to improve grant making practices to Travellers. (iii) In exceptional circumstances, securing funding and administering projects that are seen to be of benefit to the Traveller community as a whole.

**1990** *Welsh Office Circular 52/90 - Meeting the educational needs of Travellers and displaced persons, Welsh Office (1990)*

**1994** *Welsh Office Circular 02/94 - Gypsy sites and planning*, Welsh Office, (January 1994)

**1994** The Criminal Justice Act brought an end to the duty on local authorities to provide sites, and also brought an end to the funding provided for the purpose. Whilst awareness of GRT issues at a national level was needed for guidance and direction, it became clear that action at a local level was needed irrespective of the UK position. As Wales was smaller it was easier to put forward political and legal arguments, which began to happen on a regular basis. Julie Morgan AM has long been at the forefront of campaigning for such causes, taking after her late mother Grace Edwards. *'Mum was a great pioneer on that front and it's been a subject very close to my heart for many years,'* she says.

**1995** The Traveller Law Research Unit (TLRU) was set up at Cardiff University by Luke Clements, a Professor at Cardiff Law School. He is also a consultant solicitor specialising in public and human rights proceedings on behalf of socially excluded groups, primarily disabled people and Roma.

As part of the Research Unit, the Telephone Legal Advice Service for Travellers (TLAST) operated between 1995 and 1998. The service provided legal advice and information to Gypsies and Travellers on any subject, and retained information on a network of 'Traveller-friendly' solicitors throughout the UK. Many of these solicitors offer a 24-hour service and will attend roadside evictions, travel to sites, and prepare cases for the British and European courts. Accessing legal advice by mobile telephone proved more useful for Travellers in isolated locations, and around fifty per cent of calls received were from Gypsies and Travellers (the other fifty per cent being from Traveller-related service providers, government officers, academics, police, media, etc.) TLAST was a unique service within Europe, funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, with Cardiff Law School covering infrastructure costs.

The closure of the service in 1998 realised the following legacy:

- The collation of a broad network of Travellers and Traveller-related service providers – in particular 'Traveller-friendly' lawyers – across the country.
- The production of a newsletter, *Travellers' Times*, a useful networking and information-sharing tool.
- The publication of a number of articles and directories, including the County/Unitary Authority-based Directory of Traveller-related Contacts in England & Wales, which further provided the means of increasing contact with useful people and information regarding the law and services relating to Gypsies and Travellers.
- Professor Luke Clements conducted and advised on many cases before the Commission and Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, including the first Roma case to reach that court (*Buckley v. UK* 1996).

- A conference on Traveller law reform in March 1997, at which nearly 100 Travellers and service providers took the first step towards discussion and agreement of necessary reforms for Gypsies and Travellers in Britain.
- From May 1998 for one year the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust funded TLRU to undertake research into the outcome for Travellers of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and to develop the process of law reform started at the conference; Cardiff Law School continued to pay the infrastructure costs.
- Joseph Rowntree and Cardiff Law School granted TLRU further support to continue research and facilitation of a process of law reform until October 2000.

- 1996** Several local authorities in Wales established Traveller Education Services (TES), largely funded through the Education of Travellers and Displaced Persons Grant which is paid under section 488 of the Education Act 1996. The role is to facilitate access into the education system for Gypsy and Traveller pupils and to support them in the system.
- 1996** Written theory driving test introduced in the UK.
- 1997** A Welsh Office survey of Gypsy-Travellers, in January 1997, estimated that there were 846 Gypsy-Traveller children in Wales: 268 between the age of 0-4, 369 between 5-10, and 209 between 11-16.
- 1998** Cardiff University and the Save the Children published a report called 'Traveller Children and Educational Need in Wales'. The Report suggested that there were at least 1,809 Traveller children in Wales, a much higher number than the Welsh Office survey.
- 1999** The Community Law Partnership was established in Birmingham with a Travellers Advice Team (TAT) of solicitors providing legal advice to Gypsies and Travellers. Following the lead set by TLAST, the Team set up a dedicated Telephone Advice Line for Travellers where callers can speak directly to experienced advisers on questions of evictions, planning matters, issues involving official caravan sites and other matters. The Travellers Advice Team provides emergency 24-hour national advice and representation and works closely with other non-government agencies working with Travellers. Without the assistance of TAT, many Travellers would be denied access to the legal system and to their rights.
- 1999** *Injury Rates in Gypsy-Traveller Children*, Hilary Beach, University of Wales College of Medicine (April 1999)
- 2000** Driving theory test updated to a computer-based test in place of a written examination. Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project introduced Driving Theory classes on a twice-weekly basis. These include essential learning skills,



recommend that changes to primary legislation should be made to put Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites on the same footing as other housing stock, in terms of for example, availability of grants, pitch allocation policy and management issues.

- A toilet, washroom and utility area for each pitch – with physical separation between the toilet, washroom and clothes washing areas.
- **Recommendation 20:** ... that there should be no expectation or pressure for Gypsies and Travellers to move into settled housing. Where Gypsies and Travellers do wish to move into this type of accommodation they should receive help and support with the application process and with managing the transition from previous accommodation.
- **Recommendation 27:** ... that the Assembly considers forming an All Wales steering group [to draw up best practice guidelines on health needs, health workers, multi-agency forums, anti-discriminatory policy reviews, providing a strategic reference point for All-Wales co-ordination between professionals in other fields of service provision to Gypsies and Travellers, such as education and accommodation].
- **Recommendation 50:** ... that the Assembly Government appoints an All Wales Co-ordinator to champion the views and needs of Gypsies and Travellers and drive forward service provision, working with Traveller Education Service staff, Gypsy Liaison Officers and other service providers and advocates for Gypsies and Travellers.
- Barriers to attending school were acknowledged, including:
  - \_ Prejudice, discrimination and bullying
  - \_ Accommodation issues
  - \_ Parental concerns about the school environment
  - \_ Traditional Gypsy-Traveller model of education within the family
  - \_ Mobility and broken patterns of education
  - \_ Unfamiliarity of the school environment
  - \_ Relevance of the curriculum'Gypsy-Travellers have a distinctive tradition of education, a tradition which is quite alien to many of the assumptions that underlie mainstream state education. In particular Gypsy-Travellers place a great deal of emphasis on education within the family. Often boys will learn a trade from their father and girl will learn to run a home and raise a family from their mother. Basic literacy and numeracy is likely to be valued, but many other aspects of school and the curriculum may seem less relevant.'

The general opinion following this review was that the National Assembly for Wales had undertaken a serious process and that most recommendations either had been carried out, or were in the process of being carried out. Prior to the establishment of the National Assembly it was agreed by all parties that Gypsies/Roma/Travellers were not to be used as a 'political football' in the election process, and these promises were upheld. In this way, some of the more melodramatic headlines seen in England have been avoided. The quality of politicians in

Wales, and the fact that they are willing to listen to GRT issues, has been positively commented upon.

- 2004**      *Children and Young People: Rights into Action*, Welsh Assembly Government (2004)
- 2005**      Aspinall, P. J., *A review of the literature on the health beliefs, health status, and use of services in the gypsy traveller population, and of appropriate health care interventions*, Health ASERT Programme Wales, Report 2, Project report, Welsh Assembly Government (2005)
- 2005**      *Guidance on Managing Unauthorised Camping*, Welsh Assembly Government (2005) <http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/localgov/guidecamping/guidee.pdf?lang=en>
- 2006**      Pat Niner, *Accommodation Needs of Gypsy-Travellers in Wales*, University of Birmingham, Report to Welsh Assembly Government (2006) <http://wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/research/accomneedsgypsy/researche.pdf?lang=en>
- 2006**      National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 47/2006, *Inclusion and Pupil Support for Wales*
- 2006**      *The Education of Gypsy Traveller Learners: A survey of provision made by schools and local authorities to meet the needs of Gypsy Traveller learners*, ESTYN report (2006)
- 2006**      Jones, G. Powell, R. Reakes, S., *Research into the Education of Gypsy Traveller Children in Wales*, National Foundation for Educational Research
- 2007**      Lishman, R., *Impact of Circular 01/2006, Supply of New Gypsy Traveller Sites*, De Monfort University (2007)
- 2007**      The Welsh Assembly Government introduced Gypsy and Traveller Refurbishment Grants and Gypsy and Traveller New Sites Grants, providing local authorities with 75% of the costs of building new sites or refurbishing existing sites.
- 2008**      The Welsh Assembly Government funded Save the Children to produce a DVD called *Travelling Ahead* about Gypsy and Traveller children and young people in Wales. Save the Children also set up a website for Gypsy and Traveller children at [www.travellingahead.org.uk](http://www.travellingahead.org.uk)
- 2008**      Powys County Council was the first local authority in Wales to employ a member of the Gypsy community as its Gypsy Liaison Officer.
- 2009**      *Getting Involved: A report into engaging with young Gypsy Travellers in Wales*, Save the Children (2009)

**2009** Good Practice Guide in Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales, Welsh Assembly Government (2009)  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/comm/091112gpgdesigningen.pdf>

**2009** Good Practice Guide in Managing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales, Welsh Assembly Government (2009)  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/comm/091112gpgmanagingen.pdf>

The Shirenewton site in South Glamorgan is a Europe-wide example of good design and the largest site in the European Union. It currently has 58 pitches with three more planned and an active waiting list, which is adhered to. The site is exemplary because there was cross-departmental involvement at Cardiff City Council, with Environmental Health, the Planning Department and engineers all involved in consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, 'and they listened'<sup>[GW]</sup>. This allowed residents to decide aspects of the design of the site and the consultation resulted, for example, in washing blocks being moved from the front of pitches to the back. Also there are pitch groupings within the site – i.e. many sites within a site – as the Welsh Gypsies and Irish Travellers don't get on with each other in general. Shirenewton site is made up of 25% Irish Travellers, 5% Scottish Travellers and 70% Welsh Gypsies. Rover Way has one Irish Traveller pitch and nineteen Welsh Gypsy pitches (mainly all the Price family).<sup>[GW]</sup>

As well as a waiting list for pitches, there is a separate Transfer List, where families wait for the chance to move next to other members of their own family. Many families are obliged to move into housing, whilst they remain on the waiting list for a pitch on a site. From the travelling families' point of view, travelling is more or less finished as a way of life and they now seek a secure base. Without this, nothing else follows easily, such as access to services, education, health facilities, work, etc. However, travelling to horse fairs remains important to retain the status of 'Gypsy' under planning law, even without a horse and wagon. Those families who retain a wooden *vardo* carry it most of the distance to places such as Appleby Horse Fair on the back of a trailer, then use it on the road drawn by a horse for the last twenty miles. These wooden *vardos* are now kept as symbols of Romani culture, rather than being burnt according to tradition. Modern caravans are still burnt under a special arrangement with the local authority.<sup>[GW]</sup>

*'At the end of the day, they're council tenants too, just like a lot of other people – except those other people have never had to worry about being evicted with just a week's notice ... Living with the fear of losing one's home, with the risk of children being taken into care, is a constant stress ... And even those in proper housing still need our help because that's not the way of life they wanted and some have been known to suffer from terrible depression.'* Julie Morgan, AM

The case is slightly different regarding the European Roma who have arrived in Cardiff in recent years, as they come from a relatively settled background and all live in houses, mainly private rented housing. This generates a different set of issues, such as overcrowding, having to move on a regular basis, and dealing with bad landlords. The Roma are culturally distinct from the established Gypsy and Traveller communities in other ways, such as language, which makes service provision for this group even more difficult. Interpreters and translators are needed for the mainly Czech, Slovak and Romanian Roma who have arrived in Cardiff in large numbers, particularly in 2004, 2007 and 2010. Cardiff was appointed by central government as a designated area for refugees and asylum seekers; in 2004 the Czech Republic and Slovakia

were admitted to the EU, and in 2007 Romania and Bulgaria were admitted, allowing greater freedom of movement for residents of those countries. Some Roma arrived with education and skills, and it has been observed that Roma children do better in school compared with Welsh Gypsies and Travellers, as they are used to a settled environment, have more commitment to school attendance and are good at languages.

The Welsh Government has established the Migrants Forum, a national strategic group chaired by the Minister for Social Justice, and has stated that Local Government will address any emerging issues on European Roma. However, at local government level no specific policy, action plan or strategy yet exists to address the needs of EU Roma migrants. Cardiff ESOL Service offered English sessions for Roma, which have been discontinued. Cardiff Communities First ran activities for Roma children and young people, but these have ended. Race Equality First ran a European Migrants Outreach Project in 2007, but this project ended in 2008 as the organisation was swamped by the number of enquiries from Roma trying to access the service. The ethnic Minority Communities Programme has produced a report to identify the specific challenges of dealing with EU Roma in Cardiff: *EU Roma Communities in Cardiff: Community Needs Analysis Report* (April 2011) and this can be accessed in full at <http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2%2C2867%2C3591%2C2907%2C4979%2C4980>

**2009** The Romani Cultural and Arts Company was established as a registered charity by Isaac Blake<sup>[G]</sup>. Working through the arts the Company raises funds to take community development and educational projects onto Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites and into non-Gypsy and 'country-folk' communities across Wales. The Company exists to promote a better understanding of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture within and beyond these communities and to work to combat racism in all forms. This is a unique Gypsy-led organisation in the UK that has gained a great deal of respect in a very short time from a wide and appreciative group – including academics, politicians, third sector organisations, educationalists, Gypsies and Travellers.

Generally, Gypsy and Traveller organisations have been effective when they have forged alliances with non-Gypsies, particularly lawyers and activist academics. The Traveller Law Reform Project (see 2002 above) focuses on working towards positive changes in the law for Gypsy and Traveller communities, including campaigning for social policy reform. Evidence provided to parliamentary select committees and investigations led to the establishment of the All Party Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Group with the assistance of Lord Avebury.

**2010** In July 2010 the inaugural meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group, serviced by the Traveller Law Reform Project, was held in the Palace of Westminster.

**2012** *Working with Gypsy and Traveller Children and Young People*, Save the Children (2012). A guide to increasing participation of children and young people in decision-making and policy-making.

**2012** *Travelling to a Better Future: Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan*, Welsh Government (2012)  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/110928gypsytravelleren.pdf>

This is the first document of its kind to be produced in the UK. It sets out policy direction for the Welsh Government and its partners in respect of Gypsy and Traveller issues. This Framework for Action focuses on several key policy areas which affect the way Gypsies and Travellers access services including accommodation, health, education, participation and planning and other barriers facing the Gypsy and Traveller community. The Framework is supported by a delivery plan which outlines in more detail how the Welsh Government will deliver on the commitments in this Framework and outlines timescales for implementation. The Framework for Action has been developed specifically for the indigenous Gypsy and Traveller population in Wales and does not address emerging issues as a result of migrant Roma from Bulgaria and Romania settled in Wales.

- 2012** The Welsh Government's Housing White Paper of 21 May 2012 (in consultation) restores the duty on local authorities in Wales to provide sites, by 'Ensuring that Gypsy and Traveller communities are provided with new housing sites by local authorities where there is clear evidence of need'. This is a direct result of the lack of take-up by local authorities of the grants for building and refurbishment of sites introduced by the Welsh Government in 2007.
- 2012** The Romani Cultural and Arts Company organized the first GRT National Symposium, held at Cardiff City Hall (for Wales' fourth Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month). The speakers included an impressive line-up of academics, politicians, representatives from education, health, children's organisations and the arts from the UK, US and Europe. Ian Hancock<sup>[G]</sup>, Professor of Linguistics, University of Texas at Austin says, *The 2012 Gypsy Roma and Traveller National Symposium has established the place of Wales even more firmly as a leader in recognizing these far-flung populations, their contributions and their distinctiveness. This event ... promises to become an annual landmark.*
- 2012** At the GRT National Symposium held in Cardiff on 22 June 2012, Jane Hutt (Minister for Finance and Leader of the House) announced the Welsh Government's intention to increase grants for building and refurbishment of sites to 100% of the cost to a local authority. This will be in conjunction with the Housing Bill to be introduced in the autumn of 2013, and will hopefully side-step the cost arguments put forward by local authorities to avoid building sites. As full planning consent is needed before a grant can be awarded, only Powys County Council at present has plans to build a new site in Brecon (on 3.8 acres of farmland acquired by Compulsory Purchase Order).
- 2012** Julie Morgan AM (previously MP) for Cardiff North chaired the inaugural Cross-Party Group meeting on Gypsies and Travellers in the Welsh Government (17 July 2012). The Group considers issues of importance to Gypsies and Travellers in Wales and provides a forum for representatives from relevant organisations to meet with AMs to discuss areas of concern.

## 9.2 'Issues' remaining

Wales has been the focus of music and the Romani language historically, and is the focus of progress on GRT issues today – but this is coincidental. As the Welsh *Kalé* of north Wales effectively no longer exist, their romantic image '*doesn't help – Augustus John and all that, it's not how it is today*'<sup>[GW]</sup>. As the Gypsy families living in Wales today, whether on sites or housed, tended to originate as Romanichals from England, there are few links with the *Kalé* of north Wales and the problems encountered have little connection with Welsh Gypsy history as described at 7.0 and 8.0 above. Issues remaining for Gypsies and Travellers today range from the minute to the mountainous, but include as examples:

- Romany Gypsies in the UK have lost many of their traditions, and retain others without exactly knowing why, or where they came from. Rediscovery of their own roots is important, and without this it is difficult to explain their rationale on issues to non-Gypsies.<sup>[G]</sup>
- As the Romany tradition has been an oral one, the culture of storytelling is important. In practice, this means that it is considered rude to interrupt, as each person must be allowed to tell their story. When an older person speaks, younger Gypsies stop talking due to respect for elders. This can make it difficult for Gypsies to participate in an open exchange of views, particularly with older persons.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- There is no single organisation in Wales dedicated to working for Gypsies and Travellers, as is the case in England. A multiplicity of agencies, however well-meaning, leads to lack of cohesion.<sup>[G]</sup>
- In recent years many non-Gypsies have been forced out of their homes due to financial problems and have taken to living in caravans. This has increased pressure on traditional Gypsies and Travellers who are often blamed for the appearance of yet more caravans in an area, but which have nothing to do with them.<sup>[G]</sup>
- The expectation from young people, as well as their parents, that they need to start earning money far earlier than is typical in the settled community discourages them from continuing into secondary education.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Balancing the right to continue in this tradition with the rights of children, as enshrined in EU and UK law on child employment, is a challenge acknowledged by the Welsh Government.
- Cultural fears of secondary education are not addressed in any education service provision – for example, there is no male/female segregation, school uniforms require short skirts to be worn with legs in view, whereas Gypsy girls wear a long skirt or trousers at home.<sup>[G]</sup>
- A perceived lack of morality regarding sex and drugs in the settled population makes some parents unhappy with mixed activities.
- A gender divide remains where girls are more likely to stay at home looking after the trailer and young children.
- School attendance at primary level has improved, as has behaviour and concentration. However, high levels of illiteracy remains an issue generally.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Gypsy and Traveller successes are not reported as widely as Gypsy/Traveller 'problems' in the press.<sup>[G]</sup> The following article is an unusual exception:  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2189845/Gypsy-schoolgirl-works-seafront-amusement-arcade-wins-place-study-English-Literature-Oxford-University.html>
- Transport to and from remote sites to any kind of education remains a problem.<sup>[G]</sup>

- Provision of health services remains difficult, as many agencies do not consider the cultural issues surrounding Gypsies and Travellers before making recommendations for service provision. Gypsies retain their antipathy towards doctors, female patients will not visit male doctors, and *mochadi* values are not taken into account.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Gypsies and Travellers see their main 'right' now as being the right to their way of life, and do not accept that inclusion need equate with assimilation. They have learnt that it is possible to have one without the other. So they will not necessarily agree with social inclusion policies or efforts to 'integrate' them with mainstream services or strategies.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Similarly, the demand that Roma worldwide speak with one voice is illegitimate as it has been shown that Roma never were one people. The different Roma groups may have shared values, but they are enforced differently, and efforts for Roma to behave in a predetermined way to suit a non-Gypsy agenda is now seen as structural racism.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Most Gypsies and Travellers are unaware of the grant-making system, and do not know that grant funding might be available to them.
- There has been more prejudice in evidence in the UK in the past few years than has been apparent for a long time. This is almost entirely related to media depiction by *My Big Fat Gypsy Weddings* and the evictions at Dale Farm.<sup>[G]</sup>

- **Big Fat Gypsy Weddings**

This programme has caused more grief and created more problems within the Gypsy community than anything else since its broadcast. The programme was seen to perpetuate stereotypes and to trivialise the image of 'Gypsies' – even though the majority of participants were Irish Travellers and the programme should more correctly have been called 'Big Fat Irish Traveller Weddings'. The failure to draw a distinction between Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers was one of the main criticisms of the programme.

*The recurring spouse abuse which featured on there would be deplored within Romani culture, not to mention be subject to punishment agreed upon by the Kris (Gypsy tribunal) ... The tide of anti-Gypsyism is on the increase in Britain too – some of the online blogs I've seen are utterly reprehensible.* Ian Hancock<sup>[G]</sup>

*It's important to make them see that programmes like 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' aren't how it really is for us ... That show disgusted me, had nothing to do with Romany Gypsies at all ... My family certainly never behaved like that.* Teleri Gray<sup>[G]</sup>

Gypsy culture is much more than dresses and make-up

<http://blogs.independent.co.uk/2012/07/23/gypsy-culture-is-much-more-than-dresses-and-make-up/>

- **Thelma's Gypsy Girls**

Bridget Deadman, 17, is an English Traveller based in Liverpool who left the televised course after Week 10, and has been quick to correct the show on a lot of things in a magazine interview.

Interviewer: *Would you say that BFGW offered an unfair interpretation of your culture and community?*

Bridget: *I think the portrayal of life for the Travellers and Gypsy community on 'Big Fat Gypsy Weddings' was an untrue and misleading portrayal, but 'Thelma's Gypsy Girls' was*

*a lot worse. 'Thelma's Gypsy Girls' concentrated a lot on the drama, violence, and dress sense of the community even though majority of the time on the course everyone was getting along fine and most girls were working well. They failed to show the different beliefs and variations within the community and instead chose to show how one portion of the community are and use this to further a stereotype of travellers and gypsies that is very far from the truth.*

<http://oxfordstudent.com/2012/07/31/big-fat-gypsy-lies/>

- In an attempt to offset the damage caused by *Big Fat Gypsy Weddings*, Jake Bowers<sup>[G]</sup> of the *Travellers' Times* set up *Travellers Got Talent*, a televised talent competition for Gypsies and Travellers during Gypsy History Month.

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/3597046/Gypsies-flock-to-TV-talent-show-Travellers-Got-TalentBari-Radt.html>

- **Dale Farm**

Dale Farm is a six-acre plot of land on Oak Lane in Crays Hill, Essex. It is located within the Green Belt and has been owned by Travellers since the early 1960s. In the 1980s it began being used as a site for Travellers when a planning appeal was won by two families against Basildon District Council for pitches on one end of the site. This grew into an unauthorised and illegal encampment established without planning permission of over 1,000 Travellers, the largest Traveller site in the UK. Next to the Dale Farm site there is an authorised Travellers' site known as Oak Lane. This has Council planning permission, and provides 34 legal pitches. In October 2011 the site gained international press coverage when residents and activists were forcibly removed to allow bailiffs to execute a clearance order. *What chance have we got when people are more interested in evictions from Big Brother than from Gypsy sites?*<sup>[G]</sup>

There is extensive press coverage of the Dale Farm case, but some related links are:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dale\\_Farm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dale_Farm)

Dale Farm Travellers hope UN official's visit will end their plight

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/feb/23/dale-farm-travellers-un-visit?intcmp=239>

Gypsies and Travellers look for more political clout

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/the-northerner/2012/jul/25/discrimination-at-work-roma-gypsies-and-travellers-caravans-voting-franchise?newsfeed=true>

Political suicide: housing Gypsy and Traveller communities

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/housing-network/2012/jul/16/local-politics-housing-gypsies-and-travellers>

- As a direct result of increased hostility from this media coverage there has been a false tip-off about guns on a Welshpool Gypsy site. This led to a raid on the site by police, who went into the site with guns, wearing balaclavas, and handcuffing people without warning. No guns were found on the site.<sup>[G]</sup>
- There have been threats on Facebook about planned refurbishment of the Welshpool site.<sup>[G]</sup>
- In rural areas of Wales farmers remember quite fondly the Gypsies arriving to help with farm work and fruit picking, but people retiring to rural Wales from around the UK have a problem with Gypsy sites in their vicinity.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Some Gypsies and Travellers have negative attitudes towards non-Gypsies due to alienation and discrimination of themselves of their family.
- Problems have arisen within sites at Bangor, Pyle and Port Talbot – all sites where the local authority has handed management of them over to the Gypsy Council. These sites

are run on a very authoritarian basis and it is extremely difficult for new families to get a pitch on-site.<sup>[G]</sup>

- Arbitrary decisions by central government affect Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. On the one hand, Traveller pitch funding of £47m is announced by government: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/jan/07/traveller-pitch-funding-announced-government?intcmp=239>

And is then followed by headlines such as 'The gypsies who lost their homes to make way for the Olympics' <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/lifestyle/2012/07/gypsies-who-lost-their-homes-make-way-olympics>

In Marlborough Travellers take matters into their own hands through sheer frustration: 'Travellers invade playing fields' <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2189796/Travellers-invade-playing-fields-30-000-year-Marlborough-College-Kate-Middleton-played-hockey.html>

Whilst in Pontypool the solution appears to be to build extra pitches on an area of subsidence: 'Pontypool Race Gypsy site extension proposed by Torfaen' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-19018379>

- Progress is being overlooked where it does exist. *Time goes on and society changes – at the same time Romany society also changes, but this is not taken into account. It is very difficult to conduct business by mobile phone while being treated as a quaint violin-playing curiosity.*<sup>[G]</sup>
- In line with a greater take-up of computing amongst Gypsies and Travellers, On Road Media set up the social networking site [www.savvychavvy.com](http://www.savvychavvy.com) in 2008 and taught young Travellers how to podcast and produce video blogs. The site has over 4,000 young people on it, allowing young Gypsies and Travellers to communicate freely in a safe place away from the discrimination and prejudice that many of them face daily. They can also keep in touch with other Travellers who have largely stopped travelling. Safe space online for real 'chavs' <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jul/30/communities.socialnetworking>

- **Stereotyping**

Stereotyping is still a major issue within Gypsy and Traveller communities. In the 2011 report conducted by the Travellers Aid Trust a written submission by the Association of Chief Police Officers noted: *The perception of Gypsies and Travellers and their behaviour by the settled community is often based on stereotypical assumptions – not helped by either national or local media – and is often negative in tone.*

The examples of stereotypical representation are legion, but many are included in this Wikipedia entry: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional\\_representations\\_of\\_Romani\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional_representations_of_Romani_people)

One example that many people will remember is the Cadbury's Flake TV advert in 1982: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cilQgunHHiY> This sexualises the Gypsy woman in a way that is unacceptable in the Romany community and uses a white English girl with 1980s hairstyle and dress. It epitomises freedom in a horse-drawn wagon, whilst using the 'sexy Gypsy' stereotype to sell its product. Professor Ian Hancock<sup>[G]</sup>, who is working to disperse misconceptions about his culture, also confirms *There are 12 million Romanies throughout the world, and those with horse-drawn wagons number fewer than 2%. Most of us live in houses and always have.*

Gypsy Wedding 'stereotype' challenged  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-18524178>

The influence of the media on negative stereotyping was pointed out many times as the main contributor to a bad overall image of Gypsies.

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Sources:

Tim Wilson<sup>[GW]</sup>, Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project

Andrée Morgan Andrews<sup>[G]</sup>, Gypsy Liaison Officer, Powys County Council

Traveller Law Research Unit <http://digitaljournalist.eu/OnTheRoad/traveller-law-research-unit/>

Equality of Opportunity Committee report on Service provision for Gypsies and Travellers

<http://www.assemblywales.org/N000000000000000000000000009105.pdf>

A Big or Divided Society? *Final Recommendations and Report of the Panel Review into the Coalition Government Policy on Gypsies and Travellers* [http://www.travellersaidtrust.org/big\\_or\\_divided\\_society.pdf](http://www.travellersaidtrust.org/big_or_divided_society.pdf)

## 10.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANI ARTS

Romani arts have been the traditional way of survival for Roma over the centuries, with music, dance and artisan craftsmanship being the main source of income for most Roma groups. However, the practising of their arts and artisanship is divided into three main areas: (i) Domestic – produced at home for the family or community; (ii) Professional – presented for a paying audience; and (iii) Religious – performed for God or for an ideal.

As a people on the move literacy was unimportant, and the opportunities to learn to read and write were few. Instead the Gypsies/Roma maintained an oral tradition of poetry, song and **storytelling** which contained the core ideas of their culture. Storytelling was improvised, or utilised folk tales from the countries travelled through, with Gypsy-related embellishments and humour added to personalise the stories. In some groups long **ballads** were composed that were partly sung and partly recited, telling the tale of the Roma exodus and the routes travelled. Many tales reflect the boundary between Roma and *Gadjé*.

Gypsy **music** and **dance** are the best known and most widely accepted of the Romani arts, having a long-established reputation throughout Europe. In a newly-published book, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (2012), the development of Romani music is explored. **Romani music** encompassed three geographical regions/traditions: (i) Middle Eastern and Balkan; (ii) Northern (Hungarian, Russian, Polish, Manouche jazz, Django Reinhardt); and (iii) Flamenco (classical and 'pop'). All styles are practised in the three forms of domestic, professional and religious.

A particular musical style known as the 'Gypsy Romance' was formalised by urban Gypsy choral groups in Russia in the nineteenth century. Russian folk and urban love songs were performed with a vibrato and a semitone decoration that draws from Romani singing, and some songs in Romani were also performed. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries choruses of Russian Roma existed in Moscow and St Petersburg and in 1886 the first-ever **Romani theatre** troupe was created, performing the operetta *Gypsy Songs in Faces* in St Petersburg. In 1887 Strauss's operetta *The Gypsy Baron* was performed with Roma playing the roles of Roma. This start led to the opening of the Romani studio **Indo-Romen Theatre** in Moscow in 1931 which concentrated on Gypsy music and dance. The theatre was originally

designed by Gypsies for Gypsies (with performances in Romani), but after a few years the theatre focused on non-Gypsy audiences. The theatre company is entirely composed of Gypsy/Roma members in all roles, from writing and directing, to performing. Its repertoire includes plays written by its members, such as *We Are Gypsies*, *I was Born in a Gypsy Camp* and *A Girl Who Brought Happiness*, as well as Russian and European works such as Pushkin's *Gypsies* and Federico García Lorca's *Blood Wedding*. The company has travelled widely and produced **films**, making its work well known throughout Russia.

The International Romani Writers Association (IRWA) was founded in Finland in 2002. The main aims of the association are to promote the multilingual **Romani literature**, to obtain its recognition as part of world literature and to strengthen the language and culture of Romani people. Some Romani authors have become well known, such as Matéo Maximoff, Paris-based with Russian Roma ancestry. The School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures, part of Manchester University runs the Manchester Romani Project. This consists of a cluster of academic research activities that provide information on the **Romani language** and on linguistic research on Romani. It also produces teaching aids, such as its DVD 'The Romani Languages - An Interactive Journey'.

In the UK the only Romany-based theatre company, the **Romany Theatre Company**, was established in Cambridge in 2002. The company presents drama productions aimed at improving the wider community's understanding of what it means to be Gypsy, Romany, or Traveller and provides education opportunities for GRT and settled communities. The Romany Theatre Company (RTC) was commissioned by BBC East to produce 36 x fifteen-minute episodes of the **radio drama** series *Atching Tan*, to run from 2008 to 2010. The series explores the relationships between members of the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller and settled communities and was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. *Atching Tan: A Gypsy Wife* is another radio drama, this time set on a Romany Gypsy site and featuring actors from the Romany Gypsy community. The play explores the Gypsy community from the inside.

The most visible Gypsy art is that found on the **Gypsy vardo**, an art form uniquely associated with Romanies, with its most ornate examples in Europe being found in the UK. The main motifs forming the basis of the decorative schemes are derived from art forms within the host society, but their combined use on the highly carved and decorated wooden wagons have made them immediately identifiable as Gypsy-style artwork. Wagon decoration was chiefly carved, with painting and gilding in gold leaf used to highlight the carved forms. Specialist wagon building firms would be commissioned by Gypsy families to produce wagons to their specification, and therefore no two wagons are the same even if some motifs are repeated. This meant that the cost of custom carved work and painting was high, and *vardos* were used as a display of wealth and status by the richest Gypsy families (mainly the horse dealers). Gypsy families who could not afford such a display of carved work commissioned the cheaper painted decoration on plain-built wagons.

The decline in the use of horse-drawn vehicles began in the inter-war period 1920-1938, with many wagon builders and wheelwrights switching their business to coachbuilding. This led to an increasing number of Gypsy families meeting their own wagon and decoration needs, at varying levels of competence. The Gypsy home-made 'peg-knife' wagons provided the base for the unique art form of the painted wagon, with some converting an existing 4-wheel dray

cart bed by adding a top. *Vardo* expert Peter Ingram<sup>[G]</sup> points out that whatever was to hand was used for building and decorating. Peg knives weren't just for **carving** laundry pegs; they were also used for carving wagon details. Wagon colours were based on what was readily available. *With the Gypsy vans you only had green or maroon or yellow, because they were easy colours to mix up in the paint mill. Yellow was used for the underworks, green or maroon for the body.* It was also common practice to buy (or build), and decorate, a wagon in stages. *Many wagons would come out painted plain and the family would take it back the following year. That's when it would be flashed out.*

After WWII separate decorative motifs began to be synthesised into a single wagon or cart backboard with entire surface areas being covered with decoration. These included carving, central motifs, ribbonwork, coachlining, running scrolls and gilded features. Artistic training was often through the process of observation and experimentation and self-taught painters rarely worked beyond the needs of their immediate families.

Necessity, and circumstances, were often the mother of invention when it came to Gypsy *vardos*. Ingram<sup>[G]</sup> remembers, *It was a matter of living on your wits. Gypsy people did **craftwork**, carved clothes pegs for selling, and did farm work. All the fruit and hop picking was done by Gypsy people and local villagers, before it all got mechanized.*

*It's important to realise that Gypsies never styled themselves on cottagers, they styled themselves on the gentry. The best families considered themselves the gentry of the road, dealing with gentry of the houses. So they had fine bone china, silver knives and forks, beautiful white lace tablecloths. The interior of a wagon was gentrified with velvet drapes, white lace-edged cloths, etc. They never had patchwork quilts as it is portrayed – they used sheets with lace edges, best quality Welsh blankets, and a silk eiderdown on the bed. They didn't have space on wagon walls for art pieces, so the practical items they used in their daily lives became miniature works of art.*

By the end of the 1950s most Gypsy families had changed their accommodation from horses and wagons to motor vans and trailers. Through the 1960s a short-lived **folk art** was the application of painted motifs to the door panels and bodywork of the J-type Bedford lorries (and other motor vehicles) used to tow the trailer caravans. The lorries were given spindle-sided rails on the sides and across the back of the cab, were very flashy, all chamfered out, painted and lined, boarded backs were panel-lined out, and loads of extra chrome, big chrome wheel discs and a big fancy step bar was added at the back for towing a modern caravan. By the 1970s this style of artistic expression had died out as the vehicle were highly conspicuous and *not good for business – people twigged you were a Gypsy and you didn't get the work*<sup>[G]</sup>.

The motorised trailer caravan was not considered a suitable base for decoration, and enforced sedentarisation on sites after the 1968 Caravan Act led to a revival of interest in expressing Gypsy identity through horse-drawn carts and wagons. Ownership of such vehicles was seen by Gypsy families as an important symbol of their identity, with wagons transported to fairs on low-loaders as showpieces. A new generation of **wagon painters, builders and restorers** emerged (a number from Gypsy families) to make new carts and wagons that replicated earlier designs, as the surviving vehicles were a finite resource. They have ensured high standards of craftsmanship even where the wagon is a symbolic artefact for display purposes. There has

also been an upsurge of interest by young Gypsies in learning the skills needed to restore and paint wagons and carts.

The past decade has seen a sudden emergence of contemporary **Roma visual art**. For centuries, visual art about the lives of Gypsies/Roma/Travellers has existed in which they have been the passive subjects. Much writing, painting and music relating to Roma in Europe had been produced by 1900 by non-Gypsy artists. These tended to represent Roma art as folk art. By the twentieth century individual Roma writers and artists began to emerge but it is in the last decade that Roma visual art has really made a public appearance.

In 2006 the London International **Gypsy Film Festival** was an international celebration of Romany culture, community and identity, as represented within the moving image. Dozens of features, documentaries and short films presented an argument against all the stereotypes, prejudice and often overt hostility displayed towards the Roma people over centuries. The film festival uncovered a number of artists with Gypsy backgrounds, and it was decided that an exhibition of work should be organised.

This was held in 2006 at Greenwich University by four artists from GRT backgrounds. The **Second Site exhibition** included work by Daniel Baker<sup>[G]</sup>, Ferdinand Koci<sup>[G]</sup>, Damian Le Bas<sup>[G]</sup> and Delaine Le Bas<sup>[G]</sup>. All four are professionally trained and have created careers without trading on 'being a Gypsy' – the exhibition was about whatever in the world concerned four artists who happened to be Gypsies. However, the commonality of their experience meant that even though their styles were different, their common history did intervene. The exhibition led to engagement with schools, an Arts Council of England grant to tour England, a precedent for the first GRT History Month, and three of the four artists taking part in the first **Roma Pavilion** at the Venice Biennale in 2007.

The '**new Romani arts** movement' is about deconstructing the stereotypes that have built up over centuries. At the same time as Romani 'revisionist' history is putting the Roma back into European history, Roma artists 'are striving not to be typical, to be challenging stereotypes and presenting new typifications of their experience' (Acton, 2011). Gypsy visual artists borrow themes, motifs and tropes across boundaries to make sense of their own situations and Roma art has two broad cultural matrices which provide the basis for contemporary GRT artists engaging with the international art market: (i) Renaissance neo-classicism transmitted via 'Socialist Realism' and married up with folklorism in Eastern Europe; (ii) New Romani Art draws on contemporary west European modern art of the twentieth century.

Daniel Baker<sup>[G]</sup> in his 2011 thesis on **Gypsy Visuality** formulates a theory based on the identification of key elements within Gypsy visual arts, crafts and décor. The research highlights the social significance of Gypsy visual culture and argues its potential impact upon Romany/non-Romany social relations. Daniel has established some significant recurrent elements that constitute Gypsy visuality for the first time. These elements are: flashiness, allure, enchantment, entrapment, ornament, diversion, discordance, contingency, functionality, performance, community, family, home, traditional skills, wildlife, countryside and gender. He proposes that the constituent elements of Gypsy visuality both reflect and inform Gypsy culture. His 2011 PhD thesis from the Royal College of Art – *Gypsy Visuality: Gell's 'Art Nexus' and its potential for artists* – is available on his website: [www.danielbaker.net](http://www.danielbaker.net)

In April 2011 the first permanent **gallery of Roma art** was established in Berlin. Galerie Kai Dikhas (the 'place of seeing' in Romani) is a gallery for contemporary art of the Roma and Sinti that shows constantly changing exhibitions of Roma artists from all over the world. A Berlin-based independent music label, Asphalt Tango, specialises in music of Roma from the Balkans, as well as rock, psychedelic folk and electronic from Eastern Europe and the music of Roma and Sinti worldwide is also promoted at the gallery.

The international exhibition of Roma contemporary art continued in the second Roma Pavilion at the 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale 2011. This included a special event, **Call the Witness**, which presented live 'testimonies', works of art, performances, talks, and conversations by and with artists, thinkers, and politicians to consider the situation of the Roma and Roma art. The event included an extensive line-up of eminent speakers and full information can be found at [www.callthewitness.org](http://www.callthewitness.org).

Back in Wales, the first **GRT National Symposium 2012** included the workshop 'How can we engage the GRT community through the Arts?' led by Isaac Blake<sup>[G]</sup> and Dr. Thomas Acton<sup>[GW]</sup>. In an interview given during the Symposium, Isaac Blake<sup>[G]</sup> said, *Having grown up on a site I know exactly what artistically barren places they can be, so what I really wanted to do was to take my passion for theatre and dance and give the kids there the opportunity to try things they normally wouldn't ... And it's fantastic to see youngsters coming alive creatively and also identifying themselves as being Gypsies and Travellers.*

The conclusions of the workshop were:

- Younger GRT community members are willing to take part in art, dance, music and drama workshops. Shirenewton site has hosted dance, drama, animation, circus, visual art, multimedia, singing, songwriting and music sessions.
- Facilities at Rover Way site are more limited, so members have to travel to Shirenewton to take part.
- Older GRT members want a trade, and are not so willing to participate in activities that don't lead to employment skills.
- There are specific cultural barriers to engagement for GRT communities (outlined elsewhere in this document).
- European Roma are unwilling to self-identify as such, making it difficult to involve them in arts activities.
- The emergence of Gypsy artists in different art forms is producing role models for young GRT members.\*
- The Arts are more inclusive than sport – there is a more diverse range of options and they can relate to culture and heritage.
- Arts activities that are well received include music (traditional to the GRT community), literature (in the form of storytelling), visual arts.
- When producing artwork, GRT members are encouraged because it is the finished artwork being judged, not themselves, which helps with issues of self-esteem.
- The process of learning in an art workshop is underpinned by physical and numerical theory (whether realised or subliminally), so knowledge is expanded generally.

\*Role models are an important impetus for GRT children. Some of the most well known include: Yul Brynner, Sir Charles Chaplin, Sir Michael Caine, Bob Hoskins, Elvis Presley, David Essex, Mother Teresa, John Bunyan (preacher), Django Reinhardt, Gipsy Kings, Ronnie Wood (Rolling Stones), Albert Lee (Eric Clapton's band), Adam Ant, Denny Laine (Moody Blues, Wings), Pablo Picasso, Bill Clinton (Scottish Travellers), Johnny Cash.

## Comments on the efficacy of arts projects in GRT communities

Some of these comments are general, some refer to England, and some refer to projects in Wales. In some cases the comments from different people contradict each other.

- When Gypsies and Travellers have been herded together by a local authority onto a site, it means that when an educational or arts project takes place, children of both groups are in the class. This means that Travellers are obliged to learn about Romany Gypsy history (which is not their heritage), or Gypsies have to learn about Traveller history (which is not their culture). As it's difficult to separate the groups due to the nature of local authority provision, each group has to tolerate learning about the other. This can lead to frustration and friction.<sup>[G]</sup>
- The two groups identify with one another, even if it's not their own heritage they're learning about.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Communities are very suspicious of arts projects being parachuted in to a site, without pre-planning or knowledge of GRT identities. We had a theatre company turn up on a site once with non-Gypsy actors and no idea of how to engage with the community.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Arts organisations are dependent on public funding, which is not a concept that GRT communities understand. Gypsies and Travellers are untrained artists and crafts people with no idea of how to access funding. When a project comes on site the community just gets the crumbs from the loaf, it benefits the artists, not the community.<sup>[G]</sup>
- GRT communities are used again and again by researchers and artists to further their own careers and nothing positive happens for the GRT – just another do-gooder doing their thing on the back of Travellers.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- I like working with the GRT kids because they're alive and interesting. The historical aspect that we cover is unique to Wales. They can see these people in the nineteenth century had higher status because of their music.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- The kids like Teleri – she's flamboyant and identifies with them.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- I've been to Shirenewton and Pontypool – it's difficult until they trust you – but the teachers who work with the kids are marvellous. [Teleri Gray<sup>[G]</sup>]
- Isaac Blake works hard, he's genuine, he fits in with the GRT community and the multicultural groups. He works well with everyone and I would endorse anything he says.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Eldra's book on the Welsh Gypsies is great, but very academic. We need a Mickey Mouse version of the book to use with the children.<sup>[G]</sup>
- The animations made with Cinetig are great but non-Gypsy children need to be educated a bit more. We need funding to do another animation, but it should be done with non-GRT children – raising awareness that G's have a history and it's interesting.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Cinetig [now Gritty Realism Productions] – Our main aim with *The Travelling Harpists* was to introduce it to young people not familiar with the story. The *Gypsy Ways* film focused on the Irish experience in Rover Way.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Kids definitely learnt about animation through the projects. One kid missing from Monkton school for weeks reappeared when the animation classes on the

Pembrokeshire National Park started. He disappeared afterwards then turned up again when the animation classes on the Auschwitz project began.<sup>[GW]</sup>

- We've worked a few times with the same group so we were able to take the work further with each session. We also arranged the possibility of OCN accreditation – this didn't work out on this occasion, but the kids focused when they heard of the possibility of a certificate.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Arts projects need to be from the grassroots up and defined by the community. Isaac Blake made the leap to gain education outside the community, but he's brought it back in.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- It's not the same as telling your own story – there are lots of talented GRT people.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Many parents see arts projects as having no practical outcomes. If they can see a practical or economic outcome the children are more likely to take up the sessions, as family pressure is to earn a living.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Preserving Gypsy heritage is a private undertaking, and even most Romany museums are owned and run by Gypsies themselves. And their oral and family history is beginning to be recorded. There are great Gypsy artists at the grassroots level, including some now using the written word very effectively.<sup>[G]</sup>
- We are starting to see a digital divide between generations. GRT youth are now very IT literate, very good on smartphones, but they're used for social networking and entertainment rather than learning. Most have good online access.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Since cold calling has been banned it would be great for Gypsies and Travellers to be involved in traditional crafts again. There is some woodcraft going on, but metalworking has almost disappeared completely. We need to re-boot traditional methods of income generation.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Scrap collecting has led to some sculpture working in metal, which got the men involved. That worked quite well.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- One Gypsy has started retraining as an artist blacksmith in order to revive the traditional crafts of his community.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Teaching of traditional crafts by elder Gypsies to the younger ones works well.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- We got the girls involved in a fashion show which led to sessions in college. That worked until they were needed back at the trailer.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Boys tend to spend their time hunting, with lurchers, fighting cocks, riding horses from the age of three, boxing, martial arts. Projects will need to appeal to these.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- There needs to be some research with Gypsies and Travellers, aimed at older and young people, into how much of the traditional arts and crafts survive, and what needs to be done to develop them as an economic option again.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- The Arson Rap Project organised by the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service was very successful as the kids were able to participate in an activity they may not normally be able to do. Over eight weeks they took part in graffiti, ceramics, T-shirt design and writing rap songs, as well as experiencing fire kit, using a hose and seeing how firefighters use the equipment from the fire engine. Given the potential for fire breakouts on sites, this was seen as a useful activity.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- There should be a Gypsy encampment set up in the Welsh Folk Museum, with a *vardo*, rod tents and fire pots. And an interactive tourist booklet, with Welsh Gypsy music by Robin Huw Bowen.<sup>[G]</sup>
- The *Travelling Ahead* project run by Save the Children has a GRT youth forum across Wales. This forum has asked for a film to be made to counteract the stereotyping in *Big*

*Fat Gypsy Weddings*. Gritty Realism Productions has started work on this, with a working title of *Big Fat Gypsy Stereotypes*.<sup>[G]</sup>

- Research is needed at ground level into what is really going on in the GRT community, and what can really be done through the Arts. There needs to be a balance between interfering and redirecting.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- The profile of the Arts Council needs to be raised within the community and it should be open to applications without trying to direct what is wanted. There is a lack of Gypsies and Travellers coming forward, but this has to be balanced against their choosing to be separate.<sup>[GW]</sup>

Sources: Ingram<sup>[G]</sup>(2012); Smith<sup>[NG]</sup>(1997); Acton (2006); various interviewees (2012)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romen\\_Theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romen_Theatre) Romen Theatre, Moscow

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Gypsies.aspx>

<http://www.romanytheatrecompany.com/> Romany Theatre Company, Cambridge

<http://www.atchingtan.com/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/writersroom/posts/Atching-Tan-A-Gypsy-Wife>

<http://www.callthewitness.org> Call the Witness, Roma Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2011

<http://www.danielbaker.net/> Daniel Baker, artist

[http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/English/safety/sci/Pages/CSI\\_ArsonRap.aspx](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/English/safety/sci/Pages/CSI_ArsonRap.aspx)

## 11.0 ARTS COUNCIL of WALES-FUNDED PROJECTS

This is an overview of projects funded by the Arts Council of Wales in the past ten years that either involve GRT groups, are run by a GRT community member, or involve GRT communities as the subject of the project.

YEAR	ORGANISATION	PROJECT	GRANT	REF.
2002-03	Bridgend County Council	A six-month project involving drama, music and dance aimed at addressing the needs and aspirations of three communities in the county borough of Bridgend; the Romany Community of Pyle, the Catholic Community of Maesteg and the Asian Communities of Pencoed and Bridgend.	£5,020.00	20021392
2002-03	Cinetig	Cinetig proposes to make five short animation films (3-5 minutes in length) with different groups across Wales. One film is the <b>Shipwrecks Project</b> , Monkton, Pembrokeshire – working with 11-16-year-old Traveller children at Priory Comp School. A key aim of Cinetig is to create films that reflect the diversity and complexity of modern Wales through the eyes of different groups.	£48,000.00	20021605
2003-04	CADMAD	A thirty-week photography project working with the three main Romany groups in Cardiff. Run by Andrée Morgan Andrews <sup>[G]</sup> .	£4,684.00	20030277

2004-05	Cinetig	<b>The Travelling Harpist</b> is a project about the history of Gypsy culture and traditions in Wales. It was carried out with young Travellers and pupils from Bynea County primary School and Monkton Priory Community Primary School. The project resulted in an animated film telling the story of the Wood Gypsy family who, in the past, brought their music and way of life to Wales, and a documentary about the making of the film. The aim of the project was for young Travellers to celebrate Romany culture in Wales through working with professional film-makers.	£30,000.00	20040336
2004-05	Bridgend County Council	<b>A Romany Story</b> short film project engaging a group of Romany Gypsies as participants working alongside a professional director.	£5,000.00	20040828
2005-06	Access All Areas	The Jaipur Kawa Brass Band, an authentic 10-piece Gypsy brass band from Rajasthan in northern India, will be touring in Europe from June to October 2005 with appearances at festivals, melas, carnivals, clubs, arts centres, theatres, schools and street events. The tour will visit a number of locations in Wales.	£4,853.00	20050501
2005-06	Edward Jay	The Devil's Violin is a unique storytelling show based predominantly on Welsh Gypsy tales with live Gypsy music. The show, which targets older children and adults, is to tour Welsh venues in Autumn 2006. Arts Council England is also being asked to fund rehearsals and a tour to secondary schools in Summer 2006.	£4,995.00	20051429
2006-07	Access All Areas	The Jaipur Kawa Brass Band, an authentic 10-piece Gypsy brass band from Rajasthan, northern India, will visit Wales during their 2006 European tour, with appearances at festivals, carnivals, arts centres, theatres, schools and street events.	£4,475.00	20060410
2007-08	Tina Carr	This project is a collaboration between two artists: Tina Carr and Anne Marie Schöne, to create a new body of work – <b>The River is My Looking Glass</b> – using large format photography and a video installation documentary practice. Both artists will be documenting the lives of Romany communities in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia to promote the effective exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Roma communities and to advance a greater understanding of the issues of racism and social exclusion by the Roma people.	£15,000.00	20070135

2007-08	Women's Arts Association	<b>Postcards from Home</b> is a 12-month community arts project based in Cardiff which will give four female community groups the opportunity to work with professional artists to create multi-media postcards in response to their local environment. Participants will include groups drawn from the Yemeni Centre in Butetown; an elderly group from the Salvation Army Centre in Ely; Cardiff's Traveller Education Service and Disability Arts Cymru.	£26,376.00	20070436
2008-09	Isaac Blake <sup>[G]</sup>	Isaac Blake seeks funding to attend a 2-week intensive training course in Graham technique at the Martha Graham School in New York.	£1,770.00	20080606
2008-09	Tina Carr	Roma Europe – support to undertake a research project into the Roma Collection in Hungary, to establish contacts and meet with minority groups for future collaboration.	£1,000.00 IOF	20080752
2009	Trac	<b>Y Fedle Fawr</b> is a year-long project of six distinct elements aimed at opening doors to the traditional musics of Wales – encouraging more people of all ages to take part in traditional music and learn about its place in the cultural life of the nation. It includes a project working with a Romany community on the <b>Pembrokeshire Varda Project</b> in partnership with the local authority, which focused on the contribution of the Gypsies to the safeguarding of traditional Welsh music, particularly the harp. Working with the Monkton School Gypsy Unit, Welsh musicians and Czech Roma activist/singer Ida Kellarova reunited young Gypsies with aspects of their heritage unfamiliar to them.	£26,815.00	20080370
2009	Community Music Wales	Community Music Wales worked with Gypsy and Traveller communities to produce a piece of music based on Gypsy culture. Workshops explored Gypsy and Traveller customs and traditions in order to facilitate the creation of lyrics that represent the Gypsy way of life. Young workshop participants had a chance to explore a range of musical styles and develop their interests, as well as gain OCN accreditation. Using the music produced, two videos were created; one by participants from the Rover Way site and the other by Shire Newton site residents, to represent their respective communities. The videos were shown at a presentation and awards evening and again as part of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2009. The project was commissioned by the Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project.	Annual revenue	20090166

2009-10	Isaac Blake <sup>[G]</sup>	To put together a new piece of work called <b>Lavior</b> (Words) using dancer Michael Williams, singer Phillippa Reeves and musician Stacey Blythe. The project will use movement, dance, music and the Romani language to explore Romani culture. Isaac will direct the piece, which will present two performances at The Riverfront, Newport.	£4,867.00	20090860
2009-10	Ethnic Minorities Communities Team	The project aims to celebrate and promote Gypsy/Roma/Traveller traditions and culture and to challenge ignorance and prejudice, thereby enhancing community cohesion. The programme includes a series of workshops led by NoFit State, Cinetig and the GRT community, leading up to GRT History Month. A poster competition in primary schools will also help raise the profile of the event. The programme will culminate in a one-day event of showcases and performances at the Pierhead Building.	£4,093.00	20090939
2010	Head 4 Arts	As part of Reach the Heights, six sessions on Romani arts and songwriting were held with Nantyglo Travellers' Group, followed by a performance. Four sessions on songwriting, Romani culture and artwork were held with Torfaen Travellers' Group, and a further four sessions were held with the same group on songwriting, digital stories, and painting, with self-employment in view as an outcome.	Reach the Heights	20090361
2010	Chapter	Gallery exhibition by Romany artist Delaine Le Bas <sup>[G]</sup> . <b>Witch Hunt</b> explores many of the experiences of intolerance, misrepresentation, transitional displacement and homelessness that the community continues to face. Witch Hunt is a multimedia project comprising installation, performance and new music, exploring the role of language in identifying the 'other'.	Annual revenue	20090951
2010	Tina Carr	Tina Carr and Anne Marie Schöne worked with the Roma Parliament & Open Society Institute, Budapest for six weeks on their <b>Once We Were Birds</b> Project: Defending and Advocating the Dignity, Culture and Human Rights of the Roma People in Hungary. Including an exhibition at the János Balázs Gallery, Budapest and continuation of their work with Roma community groups in Budapest and north-east Hungary.	£3,000.00 IOF	20100058

2010-11	NoFit State Circus	A double-pronged, 12-month project to coincide with NoFit State's move to the new John Street studio comprising: Weekly participatory workshops with the Traveller community in Tremorfa and young people from Butetown; Development of the Cardiff Youth Circus with more targeted age groups and more specialised skills provision.	£30,000.00	20100239
2010-11	Tina Carr	An application to produce a new body of photographic and audio-visual work centred on the Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wales during the period May 2011 to May 2012. Ffotogallery is a project partner.	£20,000.00	20100457
2011-12	Romani Cultural Arts Company	A visual arts installation piece by Romani artist Delaine Le Bas <sup>[G]</sup> , commissioned by the Romani Cultural Arts Company in collaboration with Chapter. <b>Pots 'n' Pans: a Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Way of Life.</b>	£5,000.00	20110374
2012	Head for Arts	Facilitating workshops for Brynmawr Travellers' Group to produce artwork for a Travellers' festival in 2012. The project was paid for by the Travellers, with facilitation by Head for Arts within their annual revenue funding.	Annual revenue	20120139

From this analysis of grants made, it seems that no application for funding of a GRT-related project has been turned down by the Arts Council of Wales in the past ten years. The projects funded can be divided into three types:

- (i) Those where Gypsies/Roma/Travellers have requested grant aid or other assistance.
- (ii) Those where GRT communities have participated in the project and have gained some direct benefit – experience, knowledge or accreditation.
- (iii) Those where Gypsies/Roma/Travellers are the subject of the project but derive no direct benefit.

The following projects have not been funded directly by the Arts Council of Wales, but are included because of their taking place in Wales and/or with GRT communities.

2006-11	South Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Young people aged between 11 and 18 in counties across south Wales took part in the 'Arson Rap Project', a South Wales Fire and Rescue initiative, with the aim of reducing instances of arson, hoax calls, anti-social behaviour and car crime in south Wales. The project also developed key skills with the young people, including confidence building, communication skills, improving team building skills, reading and writing skills and motivation. The young people also wrote and recorded a rap track to discourage others from committing crime in their area. The project was not aimed specifically at GRT communities, but young GRT members took part.	Not ACW-funded	
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2009	WNO MAX	<p><b>Equal Voices</b></p> <p>Working with young Travellers and Gypsies from the Equal Project based at West Monmouth School in Pontypool, Torfaen, exploring their perceptions and experiences of life in the valleys today and helping them capture their thoughts and words and turn them into songs.</p> <p>From April to June 2009 WNO MAX will work with two separate groups of girls and boys, bringing in writer Karen Hayes (Songs For Our Age; Merman King) and composer Stacey Blythe (Valley of Hope; Bay Women Singing) to introduce the young people to song writing and music. Once the songs have been developed they will be brought to life by Soprano Sian Cameron (Singing Club) and Baritone Mark Evans (Songbus).</p> <p>To provide them with an additional creative platform to celebrate their voices and experiences, artist Louise Carey will help them take their words and turn them into a range of public art sculptures, using a variety of materials. The sculptures will form part of a permanent art trail at Pontypool's local community farm where one of the performances of the Equal Voices songs will take place. The songs will also be performed at the school, as well as on one of the Travelling sites to allow fellow pupils, parents and family to experience the work that the young people have created. A live recording of one of the performances will be produced as a CD for those involved to keep.</p>	Annual revenue and Paul Hamlyn Foundation	20090216
2011	Small World Theatre	<p><b>Khančeske – You are Welcome – Mai Croeso i chi</b></p> <p>A two-day celebration of Romani and Traveller people and their culture taking place in west Wales.</p> <p>Day 1 – Politics and Culture – including presentations and discussions with members of the local communities, artists, academics and politicians. A rare performance by Teleri Gray and Robin Hugh Bowen of storytelling accompanied by the triple harp.</p> <p>Day 2 – Exhibitions, Workshops, Romany Food and Hungarian Ceilidh – including the opening of a new photographic exhibition by Romani photographer Andrea Annamária Duka and the UK launch of the Roma Media Archive</p>	Not ACW-funded	

		<a href="http://www.romamediaarchive.net">www.romamediaarchive.net</a> . Painting and dance workshops. Traditional Romany food, cooked by 'Hungry Dragon' over a stick fire, followed by a wildly energetic Hungarian Ceilidh with the Jani Lang Band.		
2011	Tina Carr & Anne-Marie Schöne	<p>The <b>Once We Were Birds</b> project was selected for <b>Call the Witness, Media Archive at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Roma Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2011</b>. The selection was made from an open, international submission in Macedonia during 2010. The curators stated: 'We are interested in your participation particularly because of the great artistic and research merits of your work and its relevance for the Roma communities as a kind of transnational and transversal index and resource of references, communication and knowledge production.'</p> <p>It is the purpose of the <b>Once We Were Birds</b> project to highlight the significance of Roma culture all over the world and to continue working with Roma communities both at home in Wales and the UK as well as internationally.</p> <p>The 2<sup>nd</sup> Roma Pavilion is sponsored by the Open Society Institute, New York as the Roma, although international, are stateless.</p>	ACW production grant and IOF grant (see above)	20070135 20100058

## 12.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Clearly, until basic issues relating to accommodation and health are resolved, arts activity for GRT communities could be seen as an optional luxury. However, as Wales is relatively advanced in its dealing with these issues, and many different agencies are involved, there is an opportunity for the Arts to capitalise on the lead provided by the Welsh Government, Isaac Blake, the Travellers Aid Trust, Tim Wilson and the local authority Gypsy Liaison Officers.

Without basic civil and human rights guaranteed, it is impossible for GRT communities to maintain a balanced economic position and there is a clear interest and demand from GRT communities for gaining education and skills that relate to generating income. This chimes with the need for non-Gypsy artists generally to improve their income-generating activities in the face of reduced public funding.

However, GRT communities want (and need) any intervention to relate to their own situation and to fit their own culture – not simply to replicate the host culture's ideas of how things should be done. There is a great opportunity for the Arts Council of Wales, because of the advances already made in the country, to demonstrate that it is looking beyond the stereotypes – through its understanding of how the different Traveller groups are composed

and the issues that affect them – to those issues that can best be addressed by considered provision of grant funding for arts and crafts activities. It is possible to tease apart those elements of GRT culture and heritage that relate to arts and crafts activity and which could be grant-aided accordingly. Through an understanding of the various issues that affect GRT communities it should be possible to capitalise on the explosion of interest in Roma art in the past decade and to focus on those arts or crafts activities that could become income-generating and which would directly benefit GRT communities.

Just through this review the following have been highlighted as areas of interest to GRT communities, and with focused research others could emerge: Music; Dance; Storytelling; production of audiobooks; Woodcraft; Carpentry; Woodcarving; Wagon and cart restoration; Painting & Decorating; Wheelwright work; Blacksmithing – including art smithing; Tinsmithing; Other metal crafts – gold/silver/jewellery-making; Basket-making; Roofing – thatching as well as slate; Sewing; General handicrafts; Lace-making; separating scrap into metals useful for arts, crafts and sculpture; Romani language books for children.

Such an informed and proactive approach would also provide an opportunity to move beyond the stereotype of arts funding: *Is this a BME box-ticking exercise, or a project that will genuinely aid the GRT community in some way?*<sup>[G]</sup> With cold calling prohibited and many site licences not allowing Gypsies and Travellers to carry on a business on site, alternatives must be found. 'Re-booting' traditional arts and crafts (and encouraging contemporary Roma art developments) through Arts Council funding would (a) meet the aims and objectives of the Arts Council; (b) assist in meeting the needs of GRT communities; (c) provide an opportunity for future measurement of analysis of the economic impact of Gypsy and Traveller services in the local economy.

The Travellers Aid Trust in Carmarthen is the only independent UK-wide grant making organisation that specialises in providing grants to Gypsies and Travellers. Its expertise would be invaluable to the Arts Council and their Administrator has made the following observations with regard to grant making to GRT communities:

- GRT communities are generally ignorant about how funding works.
- Capacity development within the community is needed.
- Gypsies and Travellers willingly give up their time for someone else's benefit [referring to researchers and unrequested projects], and they hope something will change. They are then disappointed when nothing comes of it.
- Gypsies and Travellers are not applying for grants – why not? Grants seem inaccessible.
- An organisation needs to think out of the box for its funding to have a real impact.
- There are diff parameters with GRT funding – monitoring needs to be slightly different, for example.
- In England there are 30-40 community-led GRT groups which act as a channel for GRT groups to access things – these don't exist in Wales.
- The Travellers Aid Trust can accept a grant on behalf of a group and facilitate it for them.
- *Another factor is that Travellers can often tell you what you want to hear rather than what they want or need. This is not meant as a deception but is a mechanism for self preservation that has emerged out of years of persecution. Breaking through this can be*

*very difficult and requires a relationship of trust to build up between grant makers and the Gypsies and Travellers concerned. It is therefore not a case of simply imparting skills, but finding a way to engage Travellers into the grant making process without it compromising those elements of their culture that make them who they are.*

The Appendix (p.93) provides more information on the Travellers Aid Trust, its information for grant makers, information on improving take-up of grants programmes, information on difficulties for grant makers supporting Travellers, and improving support for Traveller beneficiaries.

Recommendation 1: Forge a proactive relationship with the Travellers Aid Trust (TAT) and correlate Arts Council grant-making procedures with the guidelines provided by TAT for funding Gypsies and Travellers. This is a Welsh-based organisation that operates cross the UK and specialises in GRT funding. It has extensive accumulated expertise.

Recommendation 2: Team up with the Romani Cultural & Arts Company in addition to providing project funding. This review has uncovered nothing but praise for Isaac Blake – his work is universally acknowledged by academics, Gypsies, Travellers, politicians, public bodies and international organisations. This is a unique Welsh-based company that should be supported in every possible way.

Recommendation 3: Liaise regularly with the Cardiff Gypsy & Traveller Project and with other Gypsy Liaison officers in Wales, particularly for access to GRT communities without inadvertently giving offence.

Recommendation 4: Improve knowledge across all Arts Council of Wales staff. This is a list of suggestions made by interviewees during this review:

- Officers need to know why differences between Gypsies, Roma and Travellers exist, and what those differences are.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Officers need to be able to distinguish between different travelling groups.<sup>[G]</sup>
- A general awareness of Gypsy and Travellers' culture and history is needed.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- A thorough understanding of the concept of *mochadi* is needed.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Capitals 'G', 'R' and 'T' should always be used for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Avoid using 'Gypsy-Traveller' as shorthand for the two separate racial groups of Gypsies and Travellers. Use *Gypsies and Roma and Travellers*.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- There should be a separate GRT tickbox on grant application forms.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Step Up Cymru is a policies training initiative of the Welsh Government. Is shadowing or mentoring within the Arts Council of Wales possible for members of the GRT community?<sup>[G]</sup>

- Check that projects funded by the Arts Council are not perpetuating or reinforcing stereotypes.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- Work with those already working with Gypsies and Travellers in Wales, Welsh media and representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, to identify ways to improve the quality of media reporting of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales, to reduce the level of prejudice and discrimination.<sup>[GW]</sup>
- True equality is treating everyone the same, with no divisions. BME policies create a 'them and us' situation whereas it needs to be an 'all different, all equal' situation.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Check that funding decisions are made on an informed basis, not a 'box-ticking' basis.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Before setting up a project, the project organisers need to know the Gypsies or Travellers they will be working with.<sup>[G]</sup>
- Draw on the expertise of people who already act as advocates, who can help identify the best mechanisms to consult with Gypsies and Travellers to avoid misunderstandings or raised expectations.<sup>[GW]</sup>

Whilst some Gypsies and Travellers undoubtedly want the benefit of education, including arts education, that the majority society can offer, most want it without the obligation to 'integrate'. The migrations and perpetual travelling have stopped, and the threads criss-crossing Europe are now political, social and academic. At a time when the growing trend in Western economies is towards downsizing, flexitime, small business units, 'hot-desking' and self-employment the GRT style of work is closer than ever to matching the trends in the host society. In a period of general economic crisis and mass unemployment small trades are making a comeback. New working structures, greater mobility, and advances in technology should all contribute to a greater tolerance of such traditionally flexible workers and the Arts Council of Wales has a better than ever opportunity to contribute to these flexible methods modes of working through aligning them, in the GRT community, with the Arts.

## LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

SUPERSCRIPT<sup>[G]</sup> = GYPSY/TRAVELLER, <sup>[NG]</sup> = NON-GYPSY, <sup>[GW]</sup> = GRT WORKER

- Dr. Thomas Acton, OBE <sup>[GW]</sup> Emeritus Professor of Romani Studies, University of Greenwich. Ph.D. in Sociology of Gypsies. Involved in setting up the World Romany Congress, Gypsy Council, Encyclopaedia Commission, Romanestan Publications. Author of many books and articles on Roma. Patron of the Roma Support Group, Secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society.
- Susan Alexander<sup>[GW]</sup> Trust Administrator for the Travellers Aid Trust, the only independent grant-maker dedicated specifically to supporting Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, based in Carmarthen.
- Andrée Morgan Andrews<sup>[G]</sup> Gypsy Liaison Officer at Powys County Council. From a Romany Gypsy background, she is actively involved in liaison between Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and the wider community within the county of Powys.
- Isaac Blake<sup>[G]</sup> Director of the Romani Cultural & Arts Company, based in Cardiff. Working through the arts the Company raises funds to take community development and educational projects onto Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites and into non-GRT and 'country-folk' communities across Wales. A trained contemporary dancer, he also teaches dance and movement at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.
- Robin Huw Bowen<sup>[NG]</sup> The leading exponent today of the Welsh triple harp. He learnt to play the simple Celtic harp at school, and was taught the Welsh triple harp in Gypsy style by Eldra Jarman (great-granddaughter of John Roberts, Telynor Cymru. He performs as a soloist and with a number of Welsh folk groups. In 2004 he and four other triple harpists formed a Welsh triple harp 'choir'. He researches and publishes Welsh tunes and arrangements for the harp.
- Jake Bowers<sup>[G]</sup> A self-made journalist born to a Romanichal family with 17 siblings. He works to highlight and celebrate the massive contribution made by the long-established Romani minority. In 2003 he set up the Gypsy Media Company, with the aim of raising the profile of a much maligned community, and the company produces the *Travellers' Times* magazine. He has worked for BBC television and radio, for the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and many other publications. He launched the very first Romani radio programme *Rokker Radio* on the BBC.

Gerald Conn <sup>[GW]</sup>	Managing director of Gritty Realism Productions, an award-winning animator and filmmaker with over twenty years of experience whose films have been broadcast on Channel 4 and BBC and shown at numerous international festivals. Has taught animation and produced films with a number of Gypsy and Traveller schools in Wales (also with his previous company Cinetig).
Claire Dickson <sup>[GW]</sup>	Officer at Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project.
Meredydd Evans <sup>[NG]</sup>	A leading expert and musicologist specialising in the folk music of Wales. A collector, editor, historian and performer of folk music in the Welsh language who has helped to preserve Wales' musical legacy. Head of Light Entertainment at the BBC 1963-73. A senior figure in the Welsh Language Society.
Teleri Jarman Gray <sup>[G]</sup>	Descendant of Abram Wood's family in Wales. Daughter of Eldra <sup>[G]</sup> and Professor A. O. H. Jarman (joint authors of many books and articles on Gypsies in Wales, including <i>The Welsh Gypsies</i> , 1991). Works with schools and young people as a storyteller of Romani and Welsh Gypsy history.
Peter Ingram <sup>[G]</sup>	Owner of the Romany Folklore Museum in Selborne and renowned specialist builder, restorer and painter of Gypsy caravans and artefacts with over fifty years of experience. Maker of craft products such as pegs, flowers, baskets, etc. Expert in Romani history and storytelling; gives talks and craft demonstrations on Romani culture and heritage in schools. TV and radio programme consultant.
Hannah Jenkins <sup>[NG]</sup>	Director of Community Music Wales.
Delaine Le Bas <sup>[G]</sup>	A British artist of Romany background. Her art has been shown extensively in the UK and internationally.
Sam Lee <sup>[G]</sup>	Sam Lee is folk singer, promoter and animateur on a journey into the old songs of The British Isles. His band Sam Lee and Friends uses unconventional and contemporary arrangements that challenge preconceptions of what 'traditional folk' should sound like. He plays many innovative concerts across London, festival stages around the UK and radio and television appearances. His musical training came via the legendary, late Scottish Traveller Stanley Robertson – last of the great ballad singers. Sam has also spent time researching and documenting the music and stories of the Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities.

Katie Morgan <sup>[GW]</sup>	Katie is a painter and restorer, based in the Cotswolds. She paints Gypsy wagons, fairground showfronts and narrowboats in the traditional ways using techniques such as woodgraining, marbling, lining and murals. She teaches traditional painting to Gypsies and Travellers in educational workshops and classes.
Blanche Rowen <sup>[NG]</sup>	Administrator of <b>trac</b> , the folk development organisation for Wales.
Kate Strudwick <sup>[NG]</sup>	Creative Project Manager, Head for Arts. Provides a programme of arts activities in the Heads of the Valleys area, south Wales.
Tim Wilson <sup>[GW]</sup>	Director, Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project (CGTP). Has worked with Gypsy and Traveller families for over 35 years. CGTP was set up in 1981 to provide a link between the Gypsy and Traveller communities, the Council, and the wider community. The Project aims to support and enable Gypsies and Travellers to achieve a high and sustainable quality of life, within their own culture, through improving access to suitable accommodation, public services and employment skills.

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional\\_representations\\_of\\_Romani\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional_representations_of_Romani_people)

Equality and Human Rights Commission

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

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Romani Cultural and Arts Company<sup>[G]</sup>  
<http://romaniarts.co.uk/>

*Romani Language Project Manchester University*  
<http://www.romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk>

International Romani Writers' Association  
<http://www.romaniwriters.com/>

Romany Theatre Company<sup>[G]</sup>  
<http://www.romanytheatrecompany.com/>

Social network for young Gypsies and Travellers online  
<http://www.savvychavvy.com/>

Arson Rap project run by South Wales Fire Service

[http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/English/safety/sci/Pages/CSI\\_ArsonRap.aspx](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/English/safety/sci/Pages/CSI_ArsonRap.aspx)

Website of Robin Huw Bowen

<http://www.teires.com/>

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[www.thedevilsviolin.co.uk](http://www.thedevilsviolin.co.uk)

Site listing common Gypsy stereotypes

<http://thegypsychronicles.net/gypsystemstereotypes.aspx/>

Travellers Got Talent article

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Travellers Aid Trust - Grants for Gypsies & Travellers experiencing exceptional hardship

<http://www.travellersaidtrust.org/>

A Big or Divided Society? *Final Recommendations and Report of the Panel Review into the Coalition Government Policy on Gypsies and Travellers*

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Save the Children's *Travelling Ahead* project

[www.travellingahead.org.uk](http://www.travellingahead.org.uk)

Traveller Law Reform Project

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Travellers' Times magazine<sup>[G]</sup>

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Gypsies and Travellers: Their lifestyle, history and culture

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Wales Migration Partnership

<http://www.wmp.org.uk>

Cadbury's Flake TV advert (1982)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciIQgunHHiY>

### **Cardiff Gypsy & Traveller Project**

114 Clifton Street, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 1LW

Tel: 029 2021 4411, Email [admincgtp@btconnect.com](mailto:admincgtp@btconnect.com)

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## APPENDIX

### Travellers Aid Trust – Information for Grant Makers

The Travellers Aid Trust has a section of its website designed for use by grant makers which can be found at <http://travellersaidtrust.org/grant-makers/>. This section of the website and much of the information on it came about as a result of the work the Trust has been doing with other grant makers to try to identify and address some of the difficulties that can be encountered by both grant maker and applicant when supporting and working with the Gypsy and Traveller community. The site includes links to the following useful documents:

- Grant Makers' Guide to supporting Gypsies and Travellers
- Grant Makers' Fact Sheet
- Conference Report on exploring ways to achieve more informed and effective grant making
- Gypsies and Travellers Grant Makers' Resource Sheet

Below is a short overview of some of the guidelines contained in the above documents.

#### Improving take-up of grants programmes

Due to the long history of discrimination experienced by this community, Travellers are very wary about openly asking for help from anyone. This is compounded by low literacy levels and a sense of pride at not being seen as ignorant, uneducated or needing charity. There are four factors that will make all the difference for Travellers wishing to apply for funding from grant makers. These are:

1. An acknowledgement within grant guidelines that Travellers fall within the beneficiary group. Only a very small number of grant makers actually state that they will consider applications from Travellers. Although Travellers may well fall into the general beneficiary group of a grant maker, unless this is explicitly stated, Travellers will assume their applications will not be welcomed.
2. A contact within a grant making organisation whom they can talk directly to. Only a limited number of Travellers are fully literate or have access to the internet so dealing with complex guidelines and on line forms can be very intimidating. Having someone who will take the time to speak to them helps to break down the mistrust and apprehensions Travellers naturally feel when approaching someone or something that is unfamiliar.
3. The option to submit an application through a DVD, audio CD or over the phone. Travellers can find it very difficult to effectively express what they want and need on a piece of paper. Coming from a strong oral tradition, they need to be able to tell their story and a 5-minute conversation or film can often put across a far stronger and clearer message than 5 pages of written information.
4. A visit by grant makers to projects or community groups to see first hand the work that is being done. This is particularly relevant for grant makers who feel that there is

potential merit in an initial application but insufficient or unclear information to back it up. Traveller applicants can often fail to provide the kind of statistical and organisational information that many grant makers require simply because they do not understand its relevance and have failed to collect it. A visit to a project or community group will often provide grant makers with a wealth of information that the applicants failed to provide or were unable to articulate on paper.

### **Common difficulties for Grant Makers supporting Travellers**

There are a number of issues that can arise when assessing application forms or monitoring grants to Travellers. These come about primarily as a result of a failure to supply sufficient supporting documentation when applying or reporting back to grant makers. We believe that this is due to a general lack of capacity within groups. However, there is another factor which has more to do with Traveller culture as opposed to organisational competence. Grant makers expect Travellers to be accountable to them, whereas Travellers see themselves as primarily accountable to their communities.

1. Monitoring and evaluation – very few Gypsy and Traveller community-led groups, like much of the community sector, carry out proper monitoring and evaluation. This is due in large part to a failure to understand the relevance and importance of this exercise along with a lack of experience in how to carry it out effectively. For Travellers, the indicator of their success is how their work affects their community and this is their primary concern. Many groups find the various requirements entailed in reporting back to grant makers as a distraction from the hard and important work they are doing. They will often say that if you want to know how your money has been spent, come and see for yourself! There is also the issue of privacy. Travellers can often confuse a request for data on the work they are doing with a request for detailed personal information about the community they are helping. Due to a history of ethnic cleansing, Travellers are inherently wary of any data collected on them and are reluctant to gather it from their own community for the benefit of an 'outsider'.
2. Accounts and annual reports – as with monitoring and evaluation, many Traveller groups do not see the relevance of keeping detailed accounts or producing glossy reports. What matters is the work they do on the ground. Travellers can be fiercely proud and can mistakenly take offence when accounts are requested or questioned. This is not because of any attempt to misappropriate funds, but due to a lack of familiarity with the requirements of servicing a grant. Rather than risk any question of their integrity, some groups will send every single original receipt and invoice in to account for their expenditure.
3. Internal politics – as with many minority communities, factions and rivalries also affect the Traveller community. This can be very damaging for the community as grant makers become unsure of who they are supporting and whether the work they have funded or are considering supporting has the support of the community it is intended to benefit.

## **Improving support for Traveller beneficiaries**

It is not always possible to overcome all of the difficulties that have been identified in this guide, but there are a number of approaches that grant makers can take which can help. These are:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation – during our research, Travellers stated that grant makers needed to be much clearer from the beginning what exactly was expected back from groups at the end of the grant period and why. Many community groups struggle to understand ‘funding jargon’ and Travellers are not exception. This may mean a conversation via the phone or at a meeting with the beneficiary group clarifying and agreeing with them what kind of information is expected back and how they might go about collecting this. Requesting a basic interim report or carrying out a phone interview half way through the grant period can also help to make sure the beneficiary is still clear about what is expected and to help identify any problems they may be experiencing early on.
2. Annual reports and accounts – again, Travellers requested greater clarity at the beginning of the grant period about what was expected at the end of the grant period and in what format. If grant makers require annual reports and independently examined accounts along with a end of grant report, they need to be sure that the group actually has the capacity to deliver this and if not (which is often the case), consider helping the group by providing training or by identify other agencies that can help them meet these requirements. Travellers will often say that they can meet a requirement but do not in fact have any experience or additional resources to achieve it. If they are a new group or have no record of providing these documents, the assumption should be that they will need support in delivering this.
3. Internal politics – There is a well established network of Gypsy and Traveller community groups and national voluntary organisations working with and for Travellers. Although many of the groups within this network have differing views on certain issues, most of them manage to work in a co-operative manner with one another. As many grant makers will know from experience of working with other minority ethnic communities, one of the easiest ways in which to gauge a group’s capacity to work through the political factions that can exist is to request examples of its working relationship with other groups and agencies.