

July - September 2004

Special Points of interest:

- Clifford Codona Community Service Finalist in the Windrush Achievement Awards 2004
 - Glastonbury Festival
 - Extract from 'Discussion Paper Regarding Planning Sites and other issues'
 - Horsmonden
 - Firlle Bonfire Society not prosecuted
 - Gypsy and Traveller Law By Marc Willers and Chris Johnson (eds.)
-

Management Committee Meetings:
23rd October
4th December

Editor: Tammy Furey
Community Website Manager
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Friends, Families and Travellers



UK Government found in breach of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Congratulations to Keith Lomax, the Leeds solicitor who took the successful Connors - v - UK case to the European Court of Human Rights. The UK Government was found in breach of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Mr. Connors was awarded 14000 Euro damages.

There is currently no proper security tenure for Gypsies and Travellers on Local Authority sites. Only four weeks notice and a court order is required to evict a Gypsy and Traveller from a local authority site. The case will impact on the security of tenure on official sites and it is now for the Government to act accordingly. The court ruled that:

- There was no evidence that eviction by summary procedure was used as a means of maintaining a turnover of vacant pitches or of preventing families from becoming long-term occupants. Anti-social behaviour, on local authority Gypsy sites could not, in itself, justify a summary power of eviction, since such problems also occurred on local authority housing estates and private mobile home sites. In such cases, authorities made use of a different eviction powers and might only proceed with eviction after an independent

court review of the justification for the measure.

- The Court noted that security of tenure protection covered privately run Gypsy sites, therefore the Court was not persuaded that there was any particular feature about local authority Gypsy sites which make their management unworkable if they were required to establish reasons for evicting long-standing occupants.

- The Court did not find any indication that Gypsies would lose the advantage of low financial costs attaching to local authority sites. According to the submissions by the local authority, Gypsy sites did not benefit from particularly low licence fees.

- The Court was not persuaded that the necessity for summary eviction of the applicant and his family had been sufficiently demonstrated by the United Kingdom Government. The power to evict, without the burden of giving reasons justifiable to an independent tribunal, had not been convincingly shown to respond to any specific goal or to provide any specific benefit to members of the Gypsy community. It would rather appear that the situation in England as it had developed, for which the authorities had to take some responsibility, placed considerable obstacles in the way of Gypsies pursuing an

Please note that the information given in this newsletter is not necessarily the view of FFT, unless the author is given, and may not reflect the views of other Gypsy or Traveller organisations or individuals.



Irish Traveller's Movement (ITM)

Why was ITM established?

Irish Travellers are one of the most disadvantaged and under represented minority ethnic groups in Britain, suffering double discrimination, being both Irish and Traveller. ITM had its inaugural meeting November 1999. It was at the time and still continues to be the only second tier policy development agency working exclusively for and with Irish Travellers.

Aim

To further the welfare of Irish Travellers living in Britain by facilitating opportunities for them to live full and purposeful lives and enabling them to make valued contributions to their communities, and to do so in ways which address and alleviate social and economic disadvantage and promote racial harmony.

Irish Traveller Involvement

ITM has had much success in engaging Irish Travellers in decisions that affects their welfare within Britain supported by a 50% Irish Traveller representation, including youth, on its management committee. Irish Travellers lead ITM through the key positions of Co-Chair and Vice Chair. This level of representation means that ITM has first hand experience of the exclusion the community faces.

Activities

ITM emulates good practice in Ireland, such as that demonstrated by ITM Ireland and Pavee Point. Significant progress on social policy development initiatives, in relation to Irish Travellers, has been realised by effective second tier organisational provision. ITM promotes Irish Traveller participation through regular site visits, sensitive training in participation and cultural diversity, preparation and feedback and escort to and coaching at key Traveller/ other forums such as:

- The Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition;
- The Commission for Racial Equality Gypsy and Traveller Strategy monitoring group;
- Irish Equalities Working Group;
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Gypsy/ Traveller policy review;
- All Party Parliamentary Group on Travel-

ler Law Reform;

·UK Race Equality Network;

·European Network Against Racism.

ITM is an official Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) consultee and responds to national and local consultation exercises that has included; The Guidance on Unauthorised Encampments, The Housing Bill select committee enquiries; The Gypsy Traveller Bi-annual Count and The Institute for Public Policy and Research 'Moving Forward' report.

ITM disseminates information to a 400 hundred strong network regarding: legislation, policy, research, forums, events and services to over four hundred voluntary and statutory organisations and individuals dealing with Traveller issues nationally and internationally.

ITM promotes positive relations with the wider community by encouraging fair and responsible reporting. This is achieved through actively monitoring and challenging negative media portrayal and encouraging positive media interest through press releases, letters to the editor and complaints to the Press Complaints Commission.

ITM offers meditation support in the event of community tension. Examples of action include liaising with Council officials, Irish Travellers and other residents following the burning of Gypsy/ Traveller effigies in the town of Fille. Similar support was also offered in Cottenham and Chelmsford following friction between Irish Travellers and other local residents.

At a recent annual review day (June 2004) it was agreed that ITM would restructure to accommodate a welcomed expansion and focus activity within three specific areas. Irish Traveller involvement activities will now be prioritised with the support of a Community Development Coordinator. ITM will focus on policy development activities, more proactively, assisted by a Policy Officer. ITM will support the development of Gypsy and Traveller organisations (in the North of England) supported by a Capacity Building Coordinator

By Noelette Keane, ITM Director

*Irish Traveller
Movement in Britain
Banderway House,
156-162 Kilburn High Road
London
NW6 4JD*

020 7625 2255

The Gypsy & Traveller Law Reform Coalition - Open Meeting, 18th November

Schedule:

- 5 pm free buffet
- 6 pm short presentations on the work of the coalition and an open debate about progress made and plans for the future.

Lord Eric Avebury

The G&TLRC has kept us all on our toes, and has been instrumental in keeping up the momentum towards the reforms that are so desperately needed. Members of both Houses of Parliament have benefited greatly from their incisive comments, and the ODPM are taking them seriously. At last, there are grounds for hope that the ice age that has lasted since 1994 is coming to an end, and the G&TLRC is playing a key part in the process.

Kevin McNamara MP- Chair The All Party Parliamentary Group for Traveller Law Reform

Gypsy and Traveller issues are finally entering into the mainstream of the equalities debate, this is reflected in the growing involvement of bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality and Institute for Public Policy Research, this

is largely a result of the effective lobbying and campaign strategy of the G&TLRC

Trevor Phillips - Chair Commission for Racial Equality

"The Commission for Racial Equality firmly supports the work of the Gypsy&Traveller Law Reform Coalition, which is playing a critical role in driving improvements for Gypsies and Travellers, and providing a powerful voice to lobby for change. There are clearly huge challenges ahead - and we hope to work closely with the coalition in taking this and our own Gypsy and Traveller strategy forward."

Be a part of this work - come to our meeting on the **18th of November**.

Venue - London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, LONDON NW1 9XB

Nearest underground station is Camden

Please confirm your attendance by contacting Andrew Ryder:

Tel 07 985 684 921

romanistan@yahoo.com



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Gypsy&Traveller Law Reform Coalition, which is playing a critical role in driving improvements for Gypsies and Travellers"

The National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society has a Development Officer for a new Black and Minority Ethnic Community Project. The Project is about raising awareness of autism in minority communities, focusing on gaps in services, cultural perceptions and raising the profile of the issues these communities face. They are developing an anthology of people's experiences of autism which will be published with the National Autistic Society and used as a tool to lobby organisations and support providers that the issues identified need to be taken on board. They would like to

include members of the Traveller community in their project.

Please contact:

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Extract from ‘Discussion Paper Regarding Planning Sites and other issues’.

I am writing this paper following recent high profile and very traumatic evictions that have taken place around the Country. For the purposes of this paper, I will divide planning sites into: a) those where it is clear that (at least at this stage in time) attempts at gaining planning permission have completely failed; b) those sites where there is still a chance or hope of obtaining planning permission.

A) Planning sites where the planning permission route has failed (usually after many attempts).

The approach of the Travellers Advice Team in such cases is to assist the clients in question to make homeless applications relying on the case of R (Margaret Price) - v - Carmarthenshire County Council. Obviously, in order to hope to succeed in such applications the client or clients in question would have to be homeless (which they will be at that stage), in priority need (e.g. with dependant children), and not intentionally homeless (can sometimes be a problem if they have previously left official sites or left housing).

Such an application will immediately trigger the duty to provide interim accommodation under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996. Following the Margaret Price arguments on cultural aversion to conventional housing, we would then argue that suitable interim accommodation is a piece of land, site or pitch where they would at least temporarily be authorised to stay and, failing that, that they should be allowed to remain where they are on the planning site until the homelessness application has been properly dealt with. At that stage, and until suitable other interim accommodation is provided, we will seek an assurance from the Local Authority concerned that no enforcement action of any sort will be progressed. Failing such an assurance, it is very likely that an application for Judicial Review would be immediately lodged including within it an application for an injunction or stay on any enforcement ac-

tion. If an injunction or stay is obtained or if a suitable assurance is obtained from the Local authority, then the client or clients will be safe for the time being from the kind of events we have seen recently.

If the clients do not qualify for the duty to accommodate under the Homelessness Legislation or if no assurance is received from the Local Authority and the Judicial Review route fails for some reason, then, as responsible legal advisers, we will at that stage advise the clients that they should vacate the land and, if they agree to vacate the land, we will negotiate with the Local Authority a vacation date. In these circumstances, if the clients state that they will not vacate the land, we would consider ourselves dis-instructed and inform all relevant parties accordingly. Once they have vacated the land, if they do, we would continue to actively assist them and seek to avoid a scenario of frequent evictions from roadside encampments as best we can.

The purpose of this “method” is to avoid arriving at blazing barricades. With certain clients we have picked up after some of the traumatic evictions that have taken place, we have seen the terrible affects this has had on Gypsy and Traveller families. It is all very well considering taking an action against the Police and/or the Bailiffs, but the responsible position from our point of view is to take all steps to avoid it reaching such a crisis. In this context it has to also be accepted that there are some sites where the planning route simply will not succeed or where the location is simply too inappropriate and, once again, the obvious responsible legal advice is to make that clear to the clients.

B) Planning Sites where there remains a chance or hope (sometimes a very good chance or hope) of obtaining planning permission.

Obviously in such cases, the clients are keen to put all their emphasis into the at-

“With certain clients we have picked up after some of the traumatic evictions that have taken place, we have seen the terrible affects this has had on Gypsy and Traveller families”

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tempt to gain planning permission and are therefore not normally interested in the possibility of making Margaret Price style homeless applications (though it is probably the case that they are homeless since they have no authorised place to stop at that stage). I would add that the latter point is not completely clear and there is a conflict in the cases which no doubt needs to be resolved at some stage. However, the Travellers Advice Team are concerned that certain Local Authorities will have had ideas put in their head by Bulkington and Meadowland. The direct action powers used in Bulkington and Meadowlands (which require no Court action by the Local Authority) were under Section 178 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. We are especially concerned since in one of our cases involving Chelmsford Borough Council (not the Meadowlands site), direct action was taken under Section 178 without any warning despite the fact that there was an ongoing (and perfectly possible) planning case. This obviously flies in the face of the House of Lords Judgment in South Bucks District Council - v - Porter (the first Porter case) but nevertheless it is perfectly possible for certain belligerent Local Authorities to seek to use Section 178 and/or Stop Notices (current Judicial Review challenge on compatibility on going in one of our cases) and/or injunction/committal proceedings. The most worrying of all these possibilities is the use of Section 178. Therefore my proposal in this discussion paper is that in virtually all planning cases, assurance should be sought urgently from the Local Authority concerned that Section 178 powers will not be used. If that assurance is not forthcoming, the clients should be advised of the possibility of a Margaret Price Style application. Obviously the clients should be warned that if a suitable offer of a pitch, site or piece of land is made as a result of such an application, then that might in itself collapse their planning case. Nevertheless, even without a Margaret Price style application, it is always possible, of course, for a Local Authority in response

to a planning case to respond by suggesting suitable alternative accommodation. I am not, of course, talking about bricks and mortar accommodation in this respect (the Clarke case refers). If the clients then agree to a Margaret Price style application, then all I have explained under a) about the use of such applications and the possibility of a Judicial Review application if sufficient assurances are not received, applies again. Once again the purpose is to avoid precipitate eviction action. If the Local Authority do not give an assurance and the clients decline to make a Margaret Price style application, while we will be happy to pursue the planning case, they should be clearly warned about the possibility of direct action. Obviously if we get sufficient notice of direction action, we can attempt to forestall it but, as has been seen in recent cases, sometimes these situations come out of the sun at the Gypsies and Travellers concerned.

If the Travellers Advice Team do decide to adopt this approach (and I would stress again that this has not yet been decided) there are two major problems with it:-

1. The possibility of eventually having to lodge a separate Judicial Review application, aside from the planning case, will greatly increase the cost for private paying clients.
2. At present the Travellers Advice Team has a relatively small number of cases involving type A planning sites and in those circumstances we can cope with potential Judicial Review applications if it comes to it for those clients. However, we run hundreds of planning cases for Gypsies and Travellers. As a complete guestimate I would say that we must have at least 150 on the go at present. Logistically, it might prove very difficult for us if we were having to set up a large number of concurrent potential Judicial Review files. However there remains the hope that in many cases the Local Authority concerned would be happy to give an assurance about the use

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of Section 178 powers. This might cut down the number of cases to just those Local Authorities that are keen on belligerent, direct action.

I will take this opportunity as well of mentioning our clients on roadside encampments, many of whom have no real possibility of pursuing the planning permission route. Once again a guestimate of our caseload as of today of roadside cases would be at least 200. For those clients, swift and direct action is a daily fact of life. Once again, for those clients, and for the general information of the GTLRC, Margaret Price applications are proving to be of great assistance and in many of my cases I have roadside encampments on locations that are not inappropriate which have been kept in place for very long periods of time and which remain in place. I would single out one group who face particular problems from the people on roadside encampments and that group is single, healthy, childless Gypsies and Travellers. These clients (following our brave attempt in the Court of Appeal in Myhill and Faith - v - Wealden District Council) will not be found to be in priority need and thus no full duty to accommodate will be owed to them. It is especially these clients who face the bleakest position at present.

The obvious answer to this dilemma is the re-introduction of the duty to provide or facilitate the provision of sites. I will not list the numerous powerful and influential reports that have suggested this is the solution. Obviously, for those Travellers who remain for most or all of the year nomadic, this must include not only permanent sites but also transit sites and emergency stopping places. When we were all staffing the FFT/TAT stall at the Glastonbury Festival, at least one Traveller expressed the view that the provision of sites would be used as an excuse for swift and constant eviction action. I would say in response to that, and as I have already said above, that, firstly, swift and constant eviction action is

a daily fact of life for Gypsies and Travellers on roadside encampments. The Margaret Price route can go some way to try and bring a halt to that ongoing eviction situation. However it also has to be recognised that the Margaret Price route will not work in terms of roadside encampments that are not on suitable locations and that, in some areas, there is immense defense of locations that might otherwise be appropriate. If there really was adequate provision of permanent sites, transit sites and emergency stopping places and provided they were suitable sites and that proper provision was made for all relevant groups i.e. Romani Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Scottish Travellers, Welsh Travellers and New Travellers, then surely we would all have arrived at the sublime position that we want to get to. Thirdly, I appreciate that some people understandably hark back to the days (long gone I am afraid) when Gypsies and Travellers stopped on common land and other traditional stopping places and were "tolerated" in those locations for reasonable periods of time. However I would point out that the history of Gypsies in Britain since 1500 has indicated a perpetual story of prejudice, discrimination and harassment even during times when it was easier to find stopping places. Eventually even the Native Americans and the Aborigines in America and Australia had to move to what was effectively a compromised position (and I am not suggesting that the ultimate successful compromise for those two peoples has yet been reached). Realistically, even for the "perpetual nomad", avoidance of swift and constant evictions will not be achieved without arriving at our realistic goal - adequate site provision of all sorts. For those who can take the planning route, we hope that the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the amendment to DOE Circular 1/94 (awaited) might finally create a situation where there was a realistic possibility of setting up authorised sites. On the other side of things, it is clear that public site provision must be the other side

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of the equation. I am interested to note that, as yet, we have only had one incident of the attempted use of the new Police powers of eviction under Section 62A of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which section is linked in to a direction to a suitable site. In that case we successfully backed off the Police on the basis that the location identified was not suitable. I trust that the Police will continue to hold off from using these powers, and I believe that the GTLRC should press them for an assurance to that end, until such time as adequate site provision in each relevant Local Authority area is achieved. Central Government really do need to come down hard on those Local Authorities that are not moving towards this goal

within their homelessness strategies, their local development documents and their approach to unauthorised camping.

As I have said at the beginning, I hope this discussion document will do just that - start a big discussion about the issues, especially the issues arising from cases like Bulkington and Meadowlands and Kushti Bok to all of you!

By Chris Johnson,
The Community Law Partnership

For the full article please visit
[www.gypsy-traveller.org/fft/
documents.htm](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/fft/documents.htm)

Horsmonden - Back to the Green

"For the fourth year running, Gypsy people have defied the Horsmonden Parish Council who without proper consultation banned the traditional Gypsy gathering on the 2nd Sunday of September. Each year the Gypsy Council and the Romani Rights Association, their members and supporters, have been sure to attend the annual event.

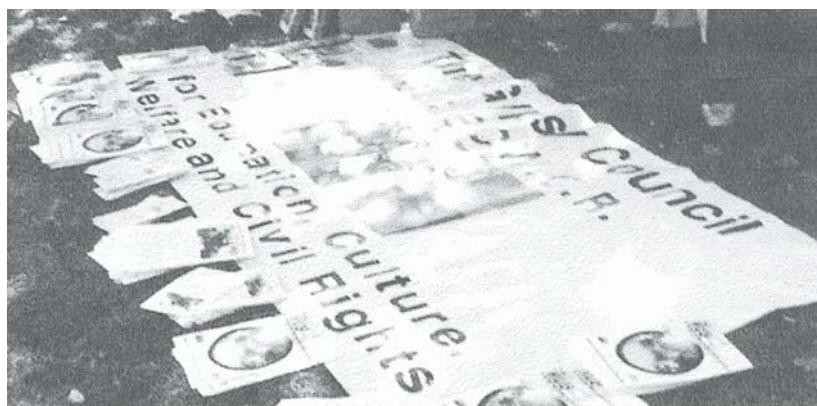
September 2003 saw what was one of the best turnouts since the cancellation, a good two hundred plus people were on the green with horses for sale, various horse drawn vehicles and harness, Thomas Acton had his book stall and the Gypsy Council had an information stall with videos and tapes for sale. The police presence was low key and friendly, a marked contrast to the past three years. The Parish councillors were again once again noticeable by their absence. The whole event passed off peacefully with all those attending having a very pleasant day. See you all there this September, Sunday 12th."

This article was originally printed in "The Hub", Spring 2004 edition. 'The Hub' is the official magazine of the Gypsy Council. To find out more, please contact:

The Gypsy Council,
8 Hall Road, Aveley, Essex, RM15 4HD.
Tel/fax: 01708 868986,

Email: thegypsycouncil@btinternet.com
Website: www.gypsycouncil.com

"...we have only had one incident of the attempted use of ..Section 62A....In that case we successfully backed off the Police..."



Part of The Gypsy Council information stall at Horsmonden

Young Friends, Families and Travellers

Brigid Anne Toohey, has just received a major national award. Brigid Anne and her family live on the official Liverpool City Council Traveller site at Tara Park, Liverpool.

Traveller pupil Brigid Anne Toohey has just received 'The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Award for young people'. The reward is in recognition of students who have made a difference to their community or school, or who have succeeded against the odds.

The Award comes in a presentation box, along with a certificate signed by The Rt Hon Charles Clarke, Secretary of State

for Education and Skills and also signed by The Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Brigid Anne, aged 13, also received a letter from Earl Spencer offering his congratulations and an invitation for Brigid Anne to visit Althorp, Diana's childhood home.

Brigid Anne and her family are overjoyed by this recognition and staff at her High School say that Brigid Anne is a natural leader, diplomat and role model for all pupils.

John Cole
Liverpool Traveller Education Service



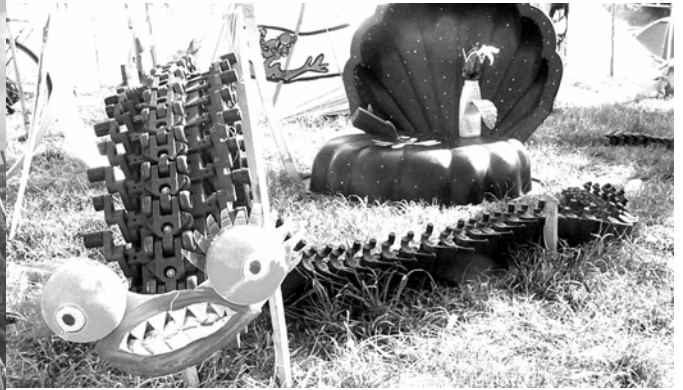
Glastonbury Festival



Young Friends, Families and Travellers at the Glastonbury Festival



To see our Glastonbury Festival movie, go to
www.gypsy-traveller.org/cyberpilots/Projects/glastonbury_festival_04.htm



A Threatened Culture

In February 2003 I read an article, regarding Gypsies & Travellers, on pages 23-25 of a magazine called "Hull in Print", which is published by the Kingston upon Hull City Council. The articles heading reads "End of the Road". A large part of my family are Gypsies & Travellers, my Father, Peter (Peter Mercer MBE) is a Romany Gypsy.

Knowing the passion that my Father has for the Gypsy & Traveller culture and how he has worked for many years promoting education, welfare and civil rights, for Gypsies & Travellers in Britain, and abroad, I found this statement very serious and extremely disheartening. It is stating the end of a culture, a culture that has existed in Britain since Romany Gypsies first came from Europe in the 16th century.

I immediately got my trailer (caravan) ready for the road. I wanted to see for myself, if the statement "End of the Road", was a forecast of what is in store for the Gypsy & Traveller Culture. So myself and my 9 year old son, Aidan, took to the road, making contact with several transient Gypsy & Traveller families. Highly mobile Gypsies, Travellers and Irish Travellers, living on the borders of urban society.

Staying with one mobile group I witnessed the deliberate hardships put upon these people, by a society that publicly prides itself on tolerance and cultural preservation. Moving from place to place, setting up camp after camp, it was obvious that many members of the public did not welcome this culture. We were faced with racial abuse, violence and wilful vandalism of our trailers.

Neither the Law nor the councils have shown much sympathy towards the needs of this nomadic culture. Faced with the constant threat of evictions, County council warrants and Section 61 of the 1994 Public Order Act, transient Gypsies and Travellers can find accessing welfare and education almost impossible.

On attending County Court hearings, as an advocate for transient Gypsies & Travellers, education and welfare assessments are not given greatest consideration in these eviction cases. Even though there are charters in place, such as

the "Hull City Council Tolerance Charter" not much evidence of tolerance has been shown to transient Gypsies and Travellers by the council. If it wasn't for the 1998 Human Rights Act, I would not have been allowed to speak on behalf of Gypsies and Travellers facing eviction at the County Courts.

On occasions friends and myself have telephoned the Hull City Council, enquiry line, as members of the general public, enquiring on Gypsies and Travellers in the town, using the phrase, "who do I talk to about Gypsies & Travellers?", we were immediately put through to the "Anti-Social Behaviour Team". The enquires could have been about any number of issues, relating to Gypsies & Travellers. Being put through to this department gives the caller an immediate opinion on Gypsies & Travellers, as the "Anti-Social Behaviour Team", usually deal with issues relating to crime, violence and drug misuse.

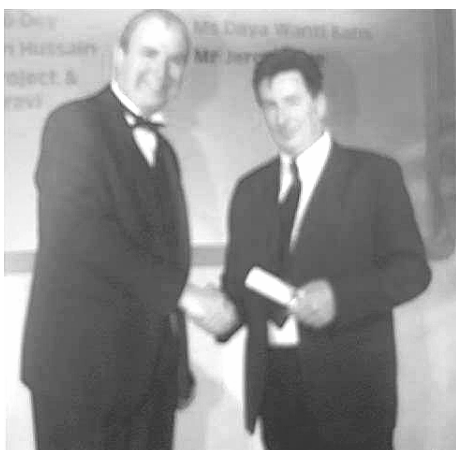
The councils could help transient Gypsies & Travellers with facilities, such as waste skips etc, enabling Gypsies and Travellers to help keep camps clean. Empty land and grounds could be designated each year by the councils and sponsored landlords, giving appropriate agencies, such as the Travellers Education Services etc, better access to travelling families. However, even after requesting such facilities, they never arrive. Not allowing Gypsies & Travellers to prove that they can keep camps clean and organised, causes public unrest and adds to the breakdown in public relations.

Every day the media tells us how Britain welcomes international cultures, however, a culture that has been part of British history, for centuries, faces ethnic cleansing, through prejudice and forced social assimilation. Steps must be taken to help preserve this misunderstood and threatened culture. Prejudice against Gypsies and Travellers needs to be addressed, or the race and culture, which is centuries old, could be lost forever, and will become another extinct flower in Britain's own cultural garden.

John Mercer
(Gypsy Advocate)

"..enquiring on Gypsies and Travellers in the town, using the phrase, "who do I talk to about Gypsies & Travellers?"", we were immediately put through to the "Anti-Social Behaviour Team".

Clifford Codona Community Service Finalist in the Windrush Achievement Awards 2004



Clifford Codona attended the prestigious Windrush Achievement awards at the Savoy Hotel, London, to collect his Community Service Award.

Windrush Awards aims to identify visible minority achievers annually in order to acknowledge - and publicly recognise - their contribution to mainstream society and their field, especially those making an impact.

Cliff Codona said "It was a great night and the first time that a Gypsy had received an

award from this event.

award from this event.

It meant that all ethnic groups are beginning to come together as one in their common goal to end racism and prejudice.

The awards were to recognise both professional and community workers for their efforts to help others."



Cliff and Janie Codona (Right) with Jake and Claire Bowers (Left) at the award ceremony

It meant that all ethnic groups are beginning to come together as one in their common goal to end racism and prejudice.

Apology to the National Association of Gypsy Women and Sylvia Dunn

There was a mistaken report in the last FFT newsletter entitled "Delegation of Gypsy Women seek justice".

We apologise to Sylvia Dunn and the National Association of Gypsy Women for the mistakes in the article.

We understand that no 'delegation' visited Strasbourg.

Sylvia Dunn visited Strasbourg in person and gave the videos and dossier, mentioned in the last article, to an influential European Human Rights campaigner.

Gypsy and Traveller Law

By Marc Willers and Chris Johnson (eds.)

Due to be published autumn 2004 Gypsy and Traveller Law is a unique practical guide to the laws affecting Travellers and Gypsies. It will bring together the relevant human rights, anti-discrimination, housing and planning laws in one useful text.

Contents include:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Site provision and the law relating to official sites
- Planning law
- Unauthorised encampments
- Homelessness
- Discrimination
- Health, education and community care

The only book of its kind, Gypsy and Traveller Law will be an invaluable resource for Gypsies and Travellers as well as their advisors.

It is essential for:

- Legal Practitioners
- Specialist Traveller advice and liaison workers
- Travellers and Gypsies
- Advice agencies - CABs and law centres
- Local authority housing, education, planning and environment departments

The book is £29.00

The discounted price for Gypsies and Travellers is £10.00

For more information, please contact LAG Books on:

Tel: 020 7833 7424

Fax: 020 7837 6094

Email: books@lag.org.uk

"...The Gypsy and Traveller community will be appalled at this decision. The caravan burning is the cause of grave concern...."

Firle Bonfire Society not prosecuted

The Attorney General has decided that the twelve villagers in Firle, Sussex who were involved in the burning of a caravan and effigies of Gypsies in October 2003, in the wake of an unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampment, will not be prosecuted. Describing it as a "complex and challenging" case, the CPS said there was insufficient evidence to go ahead. The society denies claims there was any racist intent behind its actions.

Reviewing lawyer Patrick Stevens said that for anyone to be prosecuted, it could only be on the basis of their own words or acts. He said the general picture, which emerged from the evidence, was of a "fairly disorganised group of individuals playing different parts in the event".

Noelette Keane, Director of Irish Traveller Movement in Britain says: "The Gypsy and Traveller community will be appalled at this decision. The caravan

burning is the cause of grave concern. The incident is a reflection of the tensions created between the Gypsy and Traveller and settled communities as a result of the lack of stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers in the UK. Those tensions still exist and this Government needs to take decisive action in creating a national network of residential and transit (temporary stopping places) sites for Gypsies and Travellers."

Len Smith of the Gypsy & Traveller Law Reform Coalition says: "The Gypsy and Traveller community havebeen subjected, as the Firle incident showed, to an increasing wave of intolerance and what I would suggest is incitement to racial hatred. This Government needs to introduce a duty to provide and facilitate sites. This will reduce the level of intolerance and tensions and improve Gypsies and Travellers access to services. It is a win win situation".

Housing Corporation money to be used for site construction

An article entitled "Corporation will pay RSLs to build and manage Gypsy site" appeared in Housing Today. It states that the Government is to allow Housing Corporation money to be used for site construction. This was the aim of clause 14 in the Traveller Law Reform Bill.

I think there is still a need for a statutory duty to provide/facilitate. It is very clear to me that support is growing for the clauses for the Housing Bill drafted by the CRE and tabled by Lord Avebury and Baroness Whittaker. One of these clauses calls for a statutory duty.

The article refers to an accommodation needs assessment for Gypsies and Travellers, which will be in place in 2005. Local authorities will have to produce their housing needs assessment (including Traveller sites assessment) which will then be quality assured by the regional housing boards. It will become part of the regional spatial strategies and the regional spatial strategies will allocate provision - the need to make provision - either on a sub-regional basis or on an individual local authority basis and then the local development documents which are produced locally will have to be in compliance with the regional spatial strategies. I gather that if the local development document does not contain provision for Traveller accommodation which is compatible with the assessed need then the Secretary of State can direct the local authority to modify the document and undertake a revision. Much would depend on the willingness of a Secretary of State to use their powers and the fairness and accuracy of the accommodation needs assessment.

At the ODPM Select Committee in July an official named Mr Stambollouin stated "We are hoping to publish the new needs assessment methodology before the end of this year and we would expect local authorities and regions to begin coverage by the middle of next year and there to be reasonable coverage by the end of next

year. Once those assessments are in place they will become a material consideration on appeal so if there are sites being made and Gypsies come forward with proposals for Gypsy site development then one of the material considerations will be the assessment of need".

I believe the material consideration factor is a turn on clause 6 in the Traveller Law Reform Bill, which wanted the extent to which a council had complied with its duty to provide/facilitate and developed an accommodation programme for Travellers including an assessment of need to be material considerations in the planning process.

Regards - Andrew Ryder

Extracts from Housing Today, 06.08.04 Corporation will pay RSLs to build and manage Gypsy sites By Joey Gardiner

"The Housing Corporation will pay registered social landlords to build and manage Gypsy and Traveller sites as part of a cross-party deal, Housing Today has learned. The measure will be added to the Housing Bill, which is now in committee stage at the House of Lords. It will form part of a shake-up of provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites, to be unveiled by the ODPM in autumn. The ODPM will not, however, insist that councils provide sites for Gypsies. Labour peer Lord Eric Avebury has tabled an amendment to the Housing Bill calling on the government to reinstate the obligation on local authorities. But a source said the ODPM would instead launch a consultation calling for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites to be treated as a housing issue rather than a planning problem. This means councils would be forced to take account of Gypsies and Travellers in their housing needs assessments.

The ODPM is also considering whether to set criteria for sites, including distance from schools."

"The Housing Corporation will pay registered social landlords to build and manage Gypsy and Traveller sites as part of a cross-party deal"

Viv's Spares File



Hello Folks! And welcome to the summer, here's wishing you all a good travelling season. One seasoned Traveller I met a while back said to me, "you haven't got a clue what being a proper Traveller is like!". He proudly talked of his work and the money he made, his family, sons and their families, his vehicles and caravans and the thousands of miles he covered all over Europe every year. Well, what I say is, if its in your blood, or your inclination, and you get the itch, then there's no stopping you, and a Traveller you are! I am adopted, and almost certainly from the travelling community in origin, although I haven't yet traced my parentage. I spent the first part of my life living in a house which was dusty, dark and gloomy. I didn't fit in and didn't understand why. I was always late home from school because I wanted to play outdoors, so I was sometimes punished and sent to bed without my supper! In later years, after a disastrous teenage marriage, I lived in sub-standard housing on rough council estates in poverty and isolation. I dreamed of the day when I could freely visit hills and woodland and beaches. I became very ill and it is only since I took up the nomadic and outdoor lifestyle that my health improved. I haven't lived in a house for nearly fifteen years and would prefer not to, unless it was a nice log cabin on my own patch of land. However, for most of us, the way we would like to live is denied to us due to ridiculously rigid (planning) control which is totally unrealistic for most people's needs. Agenda 21 needs to be honoured to meet the challenging climate – both weather patterns and human attitudes – so that those of us who need a base from which to live our travelling lifestyles can have one. And a base is crucial in a bureaucratic society, or else life is a stressed-out miserable existence. For more and more of us, who want to honour our spirits by living more naturally, this does not mean bricks and mortar and microwave ovens. We **do** want low impact. Self-built dwellings, or a caravan or static on a patch of grass.

This caravan and bender was my own latest attempt –

my fifth move since 2000, never mind the countless ones beforehand – to honour my chosen lifestyle. I managed to hang on in there for six months, but now, I have to dismantle the bender after sleeping in it twice and put the caravan back into storage where it has spent most of its time since I swapped it for my old



Bedford J-Type four years ago. In the meantime I am still looking for my own little plot which I can put this caravan and bender. I am being ambitious, as usual. I hope it will be in South Wales, where, currently quite a few hopefuls are testing the waters and trying to set a precedent with low impact dwellings. Just a small plot for me, please, to love and cherish and help blossom, a place from which to write my music and books, grow a few veg and honour my Travelling lifestyle as well – and I am proud to say that the Spares File, now in its tenth year, has been written mainly on the road! Is this too much to ask in Britain in the 21st century? Or are we on the verge of a big shift, of which we can truly say: "It took a long time coming, but it was well worth waiting for".

The seasoned Travelling man I met those years ago who was so critical of my patched up little old Bedford, and me, told me all about his rich and varied life, but, sadly, didn't wait to hear my story. I hope my coming future success will be an inspiration to all of us 'little folk' out there who keep trying to honour our travelling spirit and nomadic lifestyle because whether or not we begun it out of necessity, we love it and we hold our vision because this is the way we want to live our lives – naturally, and by treading lightly on our mother planet.

Viv's Spares File



* * * * *

The good news is I have got a new contact address for the Spares File, as follows:-

Viv's Spares File
Llwynceilyn,
Eglwysrwrw,
Crymych,
Cyngor Sir Penfro,
SA41 3SB

* * * * *

This Bedford CF 2.3 motorhome in reasonable condition for its year (1979) is for sale as an ideal renovation pro-



ject/gas fuel conversion, it is a collectors item, 6 berth with shower unit and double rear wheels. For details, send a S.A.E to Viv's Spares File.

* * * * *

Classic caravan, 1971 Stirling, 2 berth, lantern roof, displayed at rallies, £650 o.n.o Full awning £85 o.n.o Tel. 01765 607427

* * * * *

Wanting to buy: A very small campsite with residential static/caravan/small garden or low impact static/eco-dwelling retirement plot on an organic farm, small holding, woodland etc. with spring water. Send an S.A.E to Viv's Spares File. South Wales preferred.

* * * * *

Lancashire Motor Radiator Co. Ltd., Recore old radiators for reasonable prices (old vane types included). They also

manufacture cores, can fit a modern core into an old radiator shell. They also repair and manufacture fuel tanks. Tel. 01512071048

* * * * *

Aeron Valley Vintage Society hold regular meetings for enthusiasts for all kind of vehicles and classic machinery. Further details Tel. 01570 493284.

* * * * *

Motorhome repairs and specialist bodies and interiors. All work undertaken including insurance, MOTs Class 4-7, Lhd/Rdh. From minor cosmetic work to coach built bodies and horsebox repairs. Based at Ray Hockey Racing, Abergavenny.

Phone or email Shaun:- scspsorthome@aol.co.uk
Tel. 01873 840170 Mobile: 07977 248977

* * * * *

Transit specialists since 1970, all types for sale, Berkshire. Tel. 01189 785079. Web Address: www.roywoodtransits.co.uk

* * * * *

Used car parts nationwide, Findapart:- Tel. 09069 190444

* * * * *

Mercedes Benz Engines – 01270 526333. All engines remanufactured to British Standard. Warmingham Road, Crewe, Cheshire.

* * * * *

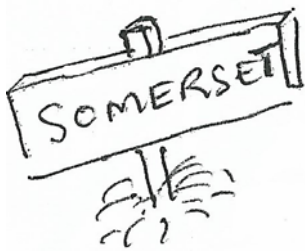
Buses and coaches bought, sold, for hire. Single and double deckers, London buses, opentop and vintage a speciality. Tel. 07836 656692 or 01306 628001 (business hours only).

Also:- double and single deck buses always available. For sale, vintage, modern, open top, etc. Tel. 01708 865656. Ensign Bus Company.

* * * * *

Finally, Adrian Bailey Classics is changing address in Leeds. New Address: Unit 1/1A, Thornton, Grove Works, Whingate, Leeds, LS12 3JB. New Tel. No. 0113 2634288.

* * * * *



Travels with Bat

Chapter Two

Scotland is a-calling

That's all Folks! Keep those wheels a-rolling until the next Spares File—Cheerio!

* * * * *

Travels with Bat - Chapter Two - 'Scotland is a-calling'.

Only three weeks left now to get ready for the Scottish International Rainbow Gathering. I visit the local weighbridge to make sure I am within limit for breakdown recovery service. Travelling alone makes cover a necessity.

The old Bedford weighs in at just under 3.5 tons with myself and Bat onboard. Phew! We both breathe a sigh of relief. "No need for you to go on a diet, Bat!" She gives me a cynical look and flops back onto her cushion,



"NO NEED TO GO ON A DIET!"

strategically placed to give her a panoramic view through the front windscreen and side window.

To achieve the weight limit I removed a lot of musical instruments, but keep on board kit for maintenance + body repairs – roof chassis. After rough treatment over winter I have several areas of the van to repaint, and the roof needs topping up. Sometimes I get chance to do a bit of refurbishment whilst travelling around. I always have a job list and rarely reach the end of it.

Monday 2nd June

The Family Fun camp, yet another Rainbow

Circle Camp, has ended happily. Hot for days, I spend much time walking Bat off site, over more of Mr. Teddy Stone's land. Absolutely disgusted at having to be tied up because of Mr. Stone's cats, Bat flings herself in delight across the beautiful meadows. 800' up in the Mendip Hills, the farmland is blessed with tall old trees, including Merlin the magic maple tree. We explore the intriguing dips and hollows, high vantage points from which to view the Somerset Levels and Glastonbury Tor. Tiny streams gush and gurgle over ancient pebbly fords and birds sing exuberantly in the thick undergrowth. The land is pure, no chemical fertilizers have been used here. Now and then a few sheep or Jersey cows come to graze, but mainly the farm is home to birds, bugs, bees, and Teddy Stones dozens of wild cats. There is a feeling of great peace.



* * * * *

The idea of a convey of vehicles from here to the gathering in Scotland seems to have fizzled out. I would have enjoyed it, had it happened. It's a few years now since I drove in such a convey, probably to Stonehenge Festival way back in the eighties! Nowadays I travel alone, doing my own thing. But that's travelling for you in Britain! Keep a low profile, remain reasonably solitary, and you avoid problems. I shall take a long, slow journey, plenty of stops and interesting places en route.



Travels with Bat

Chapter Two

Scotland is a-calling



"Hey, Fiddledy – Dee, a travellers life for me!
I drive for fifty miles,
Then stop for a cup of tea!"

Our dreams are rudely interrupted by a loud thudding on the van side, which sets Bat off with a horrible ear-splitting yelp. You get used to this sort of thing happening – but it always takes a minute or so to remember where an earth I

"TRUNDLY-DOOP THE HUMPHY HILL
STOP+STUMBLY ROUND A TREE
CAKE-A-CRUMBLY HAVE MY FIAH
ZZZZELLO! HUMZA BUMBLY BEE"
JUS' ONE OF MY MANY SONGS WOT I
LOVE TO BURBLE AS I WEND MY MERRY WAY,
AN' RIGHT NOW, I'M FLOATIN'
DOOP THIS BIG GREEN HILL
WIV WAVING PINES ON TOP. MR. SUN IS
SLIPPIN' DOWN T'BEDTIME AND SPILLIN'
HIS VERY BESTEST RED SUNSET ONTO THE
SLEEPY SKY....."

"ROLY-POLY DOWN THE HILL
STOP AN' HAVE A LONG TREE-PEE, AN'
SUN AN' WIND I'VE HAD MY FIAH
GOSH-GALUMPS, ITS TIME FOR TEA!....."



Thursday 5th June

We're driving up through Bristol at midnight, straight on to Gloucestershire. At 3am we pull into a tree-lined lay-by, at Woodchester, just below Stroud, in the Cotswold Hills. Thump! Thump! Thump!
'Yap! Yap!'

am. Of course! The lay-by below Stroud! Empty when we arrived in pitch dark, now a catering van and trailer want their pitch back to set up for the day.....

More of Bat's incredible adventures with "Her" in the next edition. ©Viviana Nomad



Noticeboard: For Sale, News, Events
and more.

*FFT welcomes letters and
articles from all our
members - so get writing!*

-
*we look forward to
hearing from you*

Noticeboard

Legal Action Group course

This is a 1 day course which is designed for legal aid practitioners, Traveller advice and liaison workers and voluntary sector workers with a basic knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller issues. Local government housing, planning and education departments responsible for Gypsy and Traveller matters will also find this course useful.

9 Sept 2004, Central London
9.45am - 4.15pm

Tel. No.=020 7833 7434
courses@lag.org.uk

Missing Person



Kenneth Jones (also sometimes known as 'Paul Jenkins') has been missing from Fife for 5 years. He may be travelling with Cash or Rhyl Travellers. His

Aunt May would like to get back in touch with him. If anyone knows him, please pass on Aunt May's telephone number: 01753 572995.

"Transformations in Romani/Gypsy Society: Past, Present, Future," 2004 Gypsy Lore Society Annual Meeting and Conference on Gypsy Studies

The Gypsy Lore Society annual meeting and conference on Gypsy Studies will be held on September 3rd and 4th, 2004, at the Great Hall, Henderson Hall, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, England, UK.

Registration fees for the two-day conference are \$35 for Gypsy Lore Society members and for postgraduate students;

\$50 for non-members. For those able to attend only one of the conference days, the fees are \$15 per day for Gypsy Lore Society members and for postgraduate students, \$25 for non-members. Postgraduate students are defined as those registered either part-time or full-time for an MA or PhD degree at a university. Status will need to be confirmed with a letter from the university or dissertation supervisor with an official stamp signature. Send cheques in US dollars or credit card information to Sheila Salo, Treasurer, Gypsy Lore Society, 5607 Greenleaf Road, Cheverly, MD 20785, Fax 301-341-1261. Don't forget to add the banquet deposit if you are planning to attend.

Deadline for attendance is 23rd August 2004

Battle of the Beanfield

Next year will be the 20th anniversary of the Battle of the Beanfield. A Beanfield Campaign has been set up to raise awareness of the experiences of the people who were there (as well as their friends and family) and to establish a network for a range of possible arts, education and media projects. To share your memories or get more involved, contact jo on 07961 571170 / beanfieldcampaign@hotmail.com

Hi, my name is Kashan Amar and I am a policy manager for **Birmingham Race Action Partnership**. I am presently trying to identify as many organisations as possible (in Birmingham) who represent Traveller and Gypsy communities. The aim of my work is to help them become more involved in the way local neighbourhoods function. A key aim of the project is to enable these communities to make a contribution to the decision making process in Birmingham, by forming part of a Network.

If you are aware of any organisations / representatives in the Birmingham area, please contact me. 0121 4567411

Contacts

Local FFT Contacts

Brighton:

Judy Pointing -
01273 698531

Cornwall:

Sue Burton -
01736 752036

Worcester:

Sheila Wells, Worcester -
01905 821 302

Lincolnshire:

Rob Torkington -
07971 542 108

Somerset:

Tony Thomson -
07779 310 577

Surrey:

Franqui Wolf, Dorking -
01306 883254

Other Gypsy and Traveller Organisations

The Traveller Law Reform Coalition,

Andrew Ryder, Policy Development Worker,
Banderway House,
156-162 Kilburn High Road
London
NW6 4JD
020 7625 2255
email: romani-stan@yahoo.com
www.travellerslaw.org.uk

Travellers Aid Trust

PO Box 16
Llangyndeyrn
Kidwelly
SA17 5YT
email: travellersaid-trust@yahoo.co.uk
www.travellersaidtrust.org

Travellers Consultancy Service

Freelance consultancy services in all areas affecting the Gypsy & Traveller Community in the UK
www.travellerscs.co.uk
info@travellerscs.co.uk

The Travellers' School Charity

PO Box 2
Goodwick
SA64 0ZQ
Tel 07717 055378
Email stigstrunk@aol.com

www.travellersschool.plus.com

Educational Advice for Travellers

Fiona Earle, P.O. Box 36,
Grantham, Lincs., NG31 6EW

The Gypsy Council

Charlie Smith / Anne Bagehot - 01708 868986

The National Association of Gypsy Women

Rachel,
CVS Building, Church Row, Darlington, DL1 5QD.
Tel.: 01325 240033
or 07748 670200

New Futures Association (NFA)

c/o 42 Wade Court, Lings, Northampton, NN3 8ND,
Tel: 07880 753 713
Email: cal-nfa@hotmail.com or mail@newfutures.fsnet.co.uk

BIAS Irish Traveller Project

Banderway House,
156-162 Kilburn High Road
London
NW6 4JD
020 7625 2255

National Travellers Action Group

Cliff & Janie Codona
01767 689736

Irish Traveller Movement in Britain

Banderway House,
156-162 Kilburn High Road
London
NW6 4JD
020 7625 2255

York Traveller Project

01904 630526

London Gypsy and Traveller Unit

020 8533 2002

Scottish Gypsy Traveller Association -

0131 650 6314

Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group (DGLG) -

Ernest Bailey Community Centre, Office 3, New Street, Matlock, DE4 3FE.
Tel/Fax 01629 583300

Irish Traveller Movement

4/5 Eustace Street, Dublin 2, Ireland - 00353 1 679 6577

Labour Campaign for Travellers Rights

0113 248 6746

Europe Roma

0208 802 7496 - 07812 694 347



FFT Contacts

Contacts can also be found at:
www.Gypsy-Traveller.org/contacts.htm

FFT contacts, other Gypsy and Traveller organisations, legal assistance, planning advice and more.....
For more contacts, please visit
www.Gypsy-Traveller.org/contacts.htm



Contacts continued.....

Pavee Point
North Great Charles St,
Dublin 1
00 353 1 878 0255

Robert Barton Trust
3 Silver Street
Glastonbury
Somerset, BA6 6BS
Tel: 01458-833797

**The Children's Society,
South-West**
Rachel Grant & Debbie
Harvey - 92b High Street,
Mid-Somer Norton, Somers-
et - 01761 411771

TravellerSpace
c/o Henjy, Canonstown,
Hayle. Kernow. TR27 6LZ.
01736 711 378
traveller-
space@linuxmail.org

**Cambridge Travellers'
Advocacy Service**
7e High Street
Fenstanton
Cambs, PE28 9Lq
Tel: 01480 496577
advocacy@ormiston.org

**Leeds Gypsy and Travel-
ler Exchange**
7 Shafton Lane
Holbeck
Leeds LS11 9LY
01132346556
07974574889

**Cardiff Gypsy Sites
Group,**
114 Clifton Street,
Roath,
Cardiff, CF24 1LW
Tel: 029 2021 4411

**Save the Children
(Scotland)**
Michelle Lloyd - 0131 527

8200

PressWise -
Mike Jempson
0117 941 5866

Groundswell
Elmfield house
5 Stockwell Mews
London
SW9 9GX
Tel: 020 7737 5500
fax: 020 7733 1305
info@groundswell.org.u
k
www.groundswell.org.u
k

**National Association of
Boat Owners**
01749 677195

**Commission for Racial
Equality (CRE)**
020 9390000

Justice?/Schnews
- 01273 685913

Planning Aid - 01963
230045

Education Otherwise -
PO Box 7420
London
N9 9SG
UK
www.education-
otherwise.org/
Email: enquir-
ies@education-
otherwise.org

Land Registry Office -
01705 768 820

**The National Small
Woods Association,**
3 Perkins Beach Dingle,
Stiperstones, Shropshire,
SY5 0PF, - 01743
792644

Legal Advice and Representation

**Traveller Advice Team
(TAT)** (Community Law
Partnership)
24hr. mobile: 07768
316755; Advice Line for
Travellers: 0845 120 2980;
and Landline: 0121 685
8595

Public Law Project - 020
7467 9800
**Squatters Advisory Ser-
vice**
020 7359 8814

Legal Aid Head Office
020 7813 1000

Chapter 7
The Potato Store,
Flaxdrayton Farm, S.
Petherton, Somerset. Tel:
01460 249204.
Email: chap-
ter7@tlio.demon.co.uk

*FFT contacts, other Gypsy
and Traveller
organisations, legal
assistance, planning
advice and more.....
For more contacts,
please visit
www.Gypsy-
Traveller.org/contacts.htm*

Friends, Families & Travellers was established in response to the passage through Parliament of the 1994 Criminal Justice & Public Order Act.

It has since grown into a nationally recognised voluntary organisation which serves the whole spectrum of the Traveller community, both traditional and new, settled or on the road.

The majority of work promoted by FFT is carried out by an Advice and Information Unit based in Brighton and covers evictions, harassment, planning, employment, benefits, education, health, civil rights, discrimination and legal representation. The Unit is also active in research, monitoring, mediation and policy development at local and national levels.

In 1999, FFT was one of five organisations short listed for the Human Rights Award, part of the United Nations International Day of Human Rights.

FFT became a company (non-profit voluntary organisation) limited by guarantee on the 14th of July 1998, no. 3597515. The company is run by a management committee made up of directors elected by the membership. Management committee meetings are held every six weeks and are open to all members.

FFT
Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton BN1 3XG

Tel: 01273 234 777
Fax: 01273 234 778

fft@communitybase.org
www.Gypsy-Traveller.org

This newsletter is kindly sponsored by



Pump Court
Barristers Chambers
Temple
LONDON EC4Y 7AB

www.1pumpcourt.co.uk



*The Telephone Helpline
for Travellers: Evictions,
Site problems and other
issues on
0845 120 2980*

Telephone Helpline for Travellers

0845 120 2980

This advice line is open between

10.00am—1.00pm and 2.00pm—5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Travellers can speak directly to experienced advisers on questions of eviction, planning matters, issues involving official caravan sites and other matters.

It is run by the Travellers Advice Team at the Community Law Partnership.
The service is funded by the Legal Services Commission.



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