

....seeking to end racism and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers whatever their ethnicity, culture or background, whether settled or mobile, and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.



Newsletter Autumn 2012

Registered Charity Number 111 2326

# Gypsies and Travellers Stronger Together

Gypsies and Travellers now have a new link directly into Government.

**The new Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group will now meet with the Minister or his civil servants at least three or four times a year.**

All this came out of a meeting back in June, when FFT and other Gypsy and Traveller organisations met with Andrew Stunell MP, then the lead Minister on Race Equality. At the meeting, we voiced our concerns that the Government had not involved Gypsies and

Travellers in making the very policies that most affected them. This particularly applied to the Ministerial Working Group on Gypsies and Travellers. We felt they hadn't got to grips with the key question of site provision or how Gypsies and Travellers might engage in a meaningful way in local authority planning processes now that regional structures have been dismantled.

Most of all, we wanted to establish a regular and meaningful dialogue with Government so that we could input into high level policy discussions before decisions are announced.

It is really good to see all our organisations working together in a coordinated way, and speaking with a coherent and unified voice to influence Government thinking and actions.



The new Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group

The new Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group will now meet with the Minister or his civil servants at least three or four times a year.

Siobhan Spencer, on behalf of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, will coordinate the work of the group.

The Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group is currently made up of :

**Friends, Families and Travellers**

**The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups**

**The Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group**

**The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain**

**The London Gypsy and Traveller Unit**

**The Gypsy Council**

**Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange**

**Irish Community Care Merseyside**



# Sparkle of success for Crystal's Vardo !

**F**riends Families and Travellers celebrated Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month 2012 by launching a new play for children and young people - Crystal's Vardo - written by Suzanna King. Its premier performance was at the Pavilion Theatre Brighton on the 28th June, where it played to a full house.

The play was born out of a need to develop a project that could help tackle the widespread problem of racist bullying experienced by young Travellers, and raise awareness of Gypsies and Travellers in schools.

Crystal's Vardo was researched and developed over a long period following an initial idea. It centres around Crystal a young Gypsy girl who has been bullied at school. She subsequently runs away aboard her grandfather's vardo only to find herself lost and forced to trust the audience to help her find her way back home.

Something extraordinary happens and Crystal and her companions find themselves far back in time to when the first Gypsies migrated from Northern India, and from hereon they embark on a journey through Traveller history. By piecing together the shards of her ancestry, Crystal regains a confidence in her own identity whilst raising the awareness of her new friends in the audience, and enabling the vardo to find its way back.

Kavanagh-Rose Rattigan plays Crystal, herself of Irish Traveller heritage, and is supported by a cast of two, Neil Thomas and Cara Fraser who play a multitude of roles.

The play was a great success, commended and enjoyed by audiences of all ages including a very positive response from the Traveller community.

**'The more children get to see plays like this, the greater the chance that unfairness towards Travellers and Gypsies will come to an end.'**

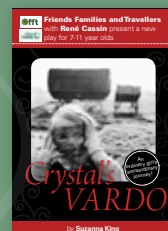
The Argus, Brighton

**'I think the show will reinforce learning about the consequences of name-calling and encourage discussion about how we welcome someone new or from a culture that is often subject to discrimination/ prejudice and also how we challenge prejudice.'**

St Lukes Primary, Brighton

**'It would be a fantastic starting point for schools that have not experienced Travellers within the community and equally excellent at supporting ones that have.'**

Carden Primary, Brighton



**We urgently need funding for this project to take it to a wider audience. If you are able to help or would be interested in finding out more about Crystal's Vardo please contact [suzanna@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto:suzanna@gypsy-traveller.org)**

# FFT SHOWCASES PARTNERSHIP WORK

FFT received funding to run 3 events showcasing the work we have done in partnership with Fire and Rescue Services, Domestic Violence Support and Prison and Probation services.

In June we held a very successful learning event where Fire and Rescue Services came together and presented best practice and learning on Gypsy Traveller Fire Safety. From this event we have created a Recommendation Report which gives Fire and Rescue Services information and advice on work with Fire Safety for Gypsies and Travellers.

In July we took part in a Domestic Violence learning event held by the Domestic Violence lead for Brighton and Hove City Council with key stakeholders including the Police, Housing and Women's Domestic Violence Support organisations. And in September we are holding another learning seminar aimed at Prison and Probation services which will look at

work carried out in Prisons with Gypsies and Travellers including wellbeing support FFT provide and cultural awareness training taken up by Prison and Probation teams. These events will also create Recommendation Reports on work with Gypsies and Travellers in Prison and Domestic Violence support services.



## HOW DO YOU DO! Meet Sussex Gypsies and Travellers past and present.

FFT has been awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to collect, document and catalogue interviews and images from the Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities, and other Sussex residents with Gypsy or Traveller heritage. Liz MacPherson has been appointed as the Project Officer and will be responsible for the day to day running of the project. If you would like to participate in this exciting new piece of work as a volunteer interviewer/ interviewee or in another capacity please contact Liz by email at: [liz@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto:liz@gypsy-traveller.org)



## THANK YOU!

FFT would like to thank Kev for donating two craft items to FFT recently. As a result of seeing the photos on Facebook we have now had two more offers of craft items. These items will be sold in a silent auction at FFT's next fundraising event, and any monies raised will go towards funding the national helpline.

If you would like to donate money, or a craft item please contact - [liz@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto:liz@gypsy-traveller.org)







# Friends Families and Travellers

Community Base 113 Queens Road Brighton East Sussex BN1 3XG  
Telephone 01273 234 777 Fax 01273 234 778 [fft@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto:fft@gypsy-traveller.org) [www.gypsy-traveller.org](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org)

**Friends, Families & Travellers** is a nationally recognised voluntary organisation which serves the whole spectrum of the Traveller community, both traditional and new, settled or on the road. **FFT** runs a national helpline covering evictions, harassment, planning, employment, benefits, education, health, civil rights, discrimination and legal representation.

**FFT** is also active in community support, research, monitoring, mediation and policy development at local and national levels.



 Join us on Facebook 

I would like to join **Friends Families and Travellers**.  
I understand that this will enable me to vote at the Annual General Meeting, attend Management Committee Meetings and receive copies of the newsletter.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

POSTCODE .....

SIGNATURE .....

I enclose my subscription  
Waged - £10.00  Unwaged - £5.00  Organistaion - £25.00  or donation

I do not wish to join FFT but wish to make a donation   
Please state if you wish to remain anonymous.

I do not wish to join FFT, but would like to receive newsletters   
subscription costs as above

Please make cheques payable to FFT and return to  
**FFT, Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton BN1 3XG**  
All membership information held by FFT is confidential and will not be available to others without your consent

## National Contacts

For more contacts please phone or visit  
[www.gypsy-traveller.org/contacts.htm](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/contacts.htm)

**Traveller Advice Team (TAT)**  
07768 316755 24hr

**Community Legal Advice**  
Mon-Fri 0121 685 8677  
Emergency 07768 316755

**Family Rights Group**  
0800 731 1696

**Squatters Advisory Service**  
020 7359 8814

**The Traveller Law Reform Project**  
[www.travellerslaw.org.uk](http://www.travellerslaw.org.uk)

**Travellers Aid Trust**  
[www.travellersaidtrust.org](http://www.travellersaidtrust.org)

**The Gypsy Council**  
01708 868986

**UK Association of Gypsy Women**  
Tel. 01325 788281  
Mob. 07880 637591  
[UKAGW@Ymail.com](mailto:UKAGW@Ymail.com)  
[RFUKAGW@live.co.uk](mailto:RFUKAGW@live.co.uk)

**Shelter (homeless)**  
0808 800 4444

**Pavee Point**  
00 353 1 878 0255

**Children's Society**  
South-West 01761 411771

**Groundswell**  
Tel: 020 7737 5500  
[info@groundswell.org.uk](mailto:info@groundswell.org.uk)

**National Association of Boat Owners**  
01749 677195

**Equality & Human Rights Commission**  
020 9390000

**Education Otherwise**  
[enquiries@educationotherwise.org](mailto:enquiries@educationotherwise.org)

**The Travellers' School Charity**  
07717 055378

**Roma Support Group**  
020 7511 5721