

Friends, Families and Travellers

Feb - May
2010

Government U-turn on Security of Tenure – Put Your Case

If you are a Council tenant in a house or a flat and the Council takes possession action against you, you are entitled to put your case in court. However, if you are a Gypsy or a Traveller on a Council caravan site you have no such right. Both the European Court of Human Rights (in 2004) and the House of Lords (in 2008) have said that this situation amounted to a breach of Human Rights. The Government said they would amend the law by including Council sites within the provisions of the Mobile Homes Act 1983.

After an extensive and drawn out consultation process, the Government released an e-mail to certain organisations on 10th February 2010 (no public announcement having been



made) saying that they no longer had time to introduce the necessary amending powers.

This is despite the fact that security of tenure could be introduced with a few simple sentences. Additionally Councils could introduce security of tenure on their sites by the addition of a simple clause in their licence agreements (as has

already been done by Oxfordshire County Council). If you are a Gypsy or Traveller resident on a local authority site and want to put your case about this shameful situation to the Government and to your Council, then please telephone The Community Law Partnership on 0121 685 8595 and ask to speak to a member of the Travellers Advice Team.

Holocaust Memorial Day



On 28th January the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform held a meeting in Parliament to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January).

We heard from Donald Kenrick, author of *Gypsies under the Swastika*, about

the experience of Gypsies and Travellers during the Holocaust, where up to half of the European population of Travellers died.

PHOTO: LIGHTING CANDLES OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT TO REMEMBER THE GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS WHO DIED IN THE HOLOCAUST



Health and Wellbeing Project Contacts

For more information
about national health
policy initiatives:

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gemma@gypsy-traveller.org

Health Team News

The work of health and wellbeing is both complex and extensive. Since its early days the team had grown from 2 of us to 8. Thankfully, the team is now a manageable 5 people with the young persons coordinator and the two community support workers now working with Sarah Mann, Training and Building Capacities Manager, although we all continue to work closely together.

The Health and Wellbeing Team, now consists of Avril, Lisa and Jazka. Avril works to involve Gypsies and Travellers into the local involvement networks (LINKS) and other health fora, as well as assisting Gypsies and Travellers with access to Adult Social Care. The LINKs work is across 3 Strategic Health Authorities and we would like to hear from any Gypsies or Travellers in the East of England, the South West or South East who think they might like to get involved.

Lisa and Jazka, make up the Mental Health Team and share the post of BME Community Development Worker.

Lisa and Jazka have been working hard over the past few months to raise awareness of Gypsies and Travellers across a number of statutory agencies throughout Sussex. Lisa has spent the past few months designing and developing a *Food and Mood* booklet, which gives information on how what we eat can effect how we feel, with tips on good-mood food and healthy eating. Lisa has rolled out bespoke Cultural Awareness Training with Accident and Emergency Departments and Prisons, whilst fresh back from maternity leave Jazka has given presentations to 40 Approved Mental Health Professionals, Community Mental Health Teams and Sussex Partnership Trust Governors.

Lisa and Jazka work in Partnership with Rethink and Crawley Ethnic Minority Project as part of the Government's Delivering Race Equality Programme. Together are planning an International Women's Day Event which is being held at the Hawth Theatre in Crawley on Saturday 27th March. The event is **free** and will be open to women from West Sussex from all ethnic backgrounds. It will be a celebration of cultural diversity with guest speakers, an international buffet, international music, inspiring workshops, stalls and lots more. To find out more and book your place call the Rethink Community Development Team in Crawley on 01293 550584 or e-mail bmeCDW@rethink.org

Lisa and Jazka are supported by Gemma, a well-being caseworker. The experiences that our clients face can be utilised to inform both practice and policy.

General Election – Are You Registered to Vote?

Historically the number of Gypsies and Travellers registered to vote and engaged in the democratic process has been low. Our new Community Engagement Officer, Henry Chapman is working on a project to increase voter registration and Gypsy/Traveller involvement with citizenship activities.

The project aims to encourage volunteers from the Gypsy and Traveller communities to become

more involved with democratic mechanisms and decision making within their local community. Increased engagement from Gypsy/Traveller communities in civic life will result in reduced mistrust of 'authority' and increased confidence in political processes.

The structure of the project involves contacting local councils for their support, then setting up focus group meetings

involving Gypsy/Traveller volunteers to identify support or development needs for participation in wider democratic processes.

So far 60 additional voters have put themselves on the electoral register as a consequence of this project.

Register to vote, and have your say!

henry@gypsy-traveller.org

Gypsy, Roma & Traveller History Month

It is the time of year to start considering what you are going to do to support your local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month.

The first regional planning meeting will take place at the Equality South West offices in Taunton on **Tuesday 2nd March**. The meeting will start at 11.30am and a buffet lunch will be provided. Travel and care related expenses will be reimbursed to our third sector partners.

This meeting will follow the first national GRTHM 2010 planning meeting which took place recently in London. Sally Woodbury of Friends, Families and Travellers will be attending as the South West representative and will provide an update at our regional meeting on national activities and funding for community groups.

Further details and an agenda will be circulated to everyone in February.

We will discuss the national

theme for 2010 and ideas and support for local and regional events.

Some things to consider locally before our meeting:

Funding – have you contacted local statutory partners to ask if they have allocated some funding to support GRTHM in your area?

Communities – how are you developing the capacity of your local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to lead and take part in

GRTHM 2010 in your area and beyond?

Local resources and good practice – GRTHM is a great opportunity to share resources and any good practice you have been delivering with Gypsies, Roma and Travellers over the last 12 months. Done something worth talking about? Let Equality South West know so that we can promote it across the South West and beyond!

<http://www.grthm.co.uk>

Storytelling Awards

In November 2009 Leeds hosted the awards ceremony for the national Gypsy and Traveller children's storytelling competition, which was part of Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) in June.

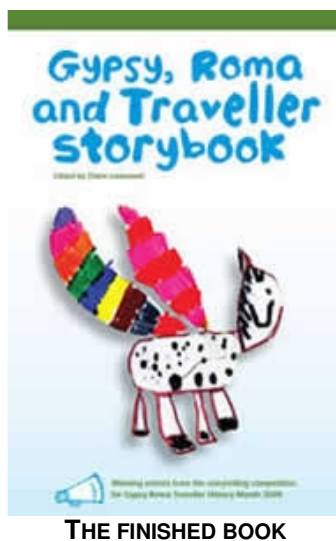
There were many creative and talented children at this event, those who had told their story about being a Traveller.

The event was a great way of celebrating this and very important in the light of the fact that many Gypsy and Traveller children suffer from racism and bullying.

The winning and highly commended entries into the competition are now in a book, *Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Storybook*, which is available from NATT.

This published book is a real pleasure to read, and will act as tool to challenge ignorance and prejudice against Gypsies and Travellers.

Congratulations to all those great young achievers! We will look forward to hearing about what GRTHM 2010 has to offer.



Traveller Law Reform Project Update

LUCY BECKETT
POLICY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

As the Policy Development Officer for TLRP for just over one month, I am purposefully finding ways to promote Traveller law reform and supporting Gypsy /Traveller /Roma communities' inclusion in the policy formulation process. The context of the pending General Election and the political background to that is proving to be significant.

One theme of the work is Public Service delivery and the importance of looking at the areas of accommodation, education, health and others, as a whole. The shortage of sites and the issues around security of tenure lead to major difficulties around accessing public services and this is a major impediment to social

inclusion.

I will be trying to develop and extend existing networks of consultation with the Traveller communities and other parties, to support strategies for effective engagement in the political process.

The framework for TLRP at the start of 2010 has included: the Mobile Homes Act and security of tenure issues, Single Equalities Bill, CLG Single Equalities scheme, APPG status pre and post Election, the policies of the main political parties, EHRC practice and guidance, the Criminal Justice system, the Child Poverty Bill.

Hopefully the TLRP will make a significant impact on legislation to protect the interests of all of the Traveller communities in this country.



Community Development

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Emma Nuttall
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Abbie Kirkby
abbie@gypsy-traveller.org

Henry Chapman
henry@gypsy-traveller.org

FFT's Community Development work in the regions

FFT is funded by Communities and Local Government under the Tackling Race Inequalities Fund to carry out community development work that ensures Gypsies & Travellers have a voice in forums, consultations, residents' groups, etc.

This work covers three English regions; the South East, South West and East. Sally Woodbury is our South-Western worker, Candy Sheridan our Eastern region worker, and Emma Nuttall and Abbie Kirkby in the South East. We also have a Community Engagement Officer, Henry Chapman, who is encouraging electoral registration and increased levels of participation in

civic and political institutions.

We have been supporting Gypsy and Traveller groups, such as site residents' groups, as well as getting lots of groups going at district council level in most of the districts of Somerset.

We have also been working with the boating community who are getting very active

politically following British Waterways plans to change moorings regulations.

We are also hoping to get Traveller forums going in areas where they don't currently exist so local authorities can consult properly with Travellers on all issues, such as sites, planning, discrimination and inequalities.



PHOTO :
CANDY
SHERIDAN AT
WORK IN HER
OFFICE

Dominique Corbett's Success Story

DOMINIQUE ATTENDED OUR WOMEN'S HEALTH GROUP. SHE IS A MEMBER OF THE EAST SUSSEX LINK CORE GROUP.

My interests, where to start! I have 4 children ranging in age from 12 to 5 years old. They obviously take up a lot of my time especially with their commitments to sporting clubs, as well as school events that I always play an active role in.

At present I am the treasurer to Marshlands school PTFA and play a very active role in all school events fairs, sporting events and fundraising promotions.

I am also at college training to be a qualified accountant (AAT level 4 this year). This began with FFT sponsoring me to do Book-keeping and

Accounts level 1 at the end of 2006; they paid through the global grant scheme for the course, travel, materials and child care.

I successfully completed that and enrolled for AAT level 2 in September 2007, AAT level 3 September 2008 and now AAT level 4. I am due to finish in June 2010.

I am pregnant with my 5th child which is due at the end of March 2010. Up until June 2009 I was volunteering at the Hailsham East Community Centre (Sure Start) in the cafe there, where I completed my NVQ 2 in Customer Service.

As my youngest started school full-time in September 2009 I was

planning on returning to work so stopped volunteering.

I have been actively involved with FFT groups at Hailsham Community Centre which is where I met Avril, this started with a women's health project.

There have been a few consultations to do with the planning of Traveller/Gypsy sites and now there is a Traveller drop-in for young mums, trying to get them interested in outside organisations like Sure Start that they would not normally consider attending due to their culture.

On a personal level my interests are reading, animals, cooking and learning new skills.

Sally Woodbury Introduces Herself

FFT'S NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKER IN THE SOUTH-WEST INTRODUCES HERSELF.

My Name is Sally Woodbury. I am a Romani Gypsy, I lived in Australia for 15 years of my childhood living a very happy life always having somewhere to pull the trailer, always having a trailer park to stay on.

I was 17 when my family returned to the UK. It was then I realised the treatment of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK.

Never having anywhere to put the trailer, Dad bought some land moved on then sought planning permission.

The letters of objection were horrid like for most Gypsies

and Travellers that apply for planning, you don't need to be told the contents you all would have had the same.

We finally got our planning but Dad could never settle so they returned to Australia.

I was then married to a Gorgi and I lived in a lovely house for a while, but started to suffer from depression.

So I bought a trailer, sold the house and moved on my Mum and Dad's as they still had their place here.

When I moved back to my Mum's I felt much better, but 4 weeks later Mum and Dad's place was sold so I started looking for some more land, very luckily I found some. But I was not

going to move on, I was going to do it the correct way as I thought no one would object if I did it correctly. How wrong I was. I was in a village hall full of objectors again saying whatever they liked about me and my children; Paris 5 and Matthew 4.

I won my planning permission and live very happily with the village as they now know me and are not making assumptions about what a Gypsy is like.

Funny thing for my husband Guy, he is a Manager of a company but they still treated him the same, so it proves it is not who you are but the perception of a Gypsy that people have the problem with.

I then met up with my best

friend, a lady in her late 60s Maggie Smith Bendell who has taught me lots, and taken me to places I thought I would never go, all the time fighting for the rights for Gypsies and Travellers.

I now, thanks to Maggie, work all over the UK helping people understand our community, teaching them about our history over 500 years in the UK that never gets talked about in many schools.

I have now started working with FFT and I love it. I am learning more each day. I think all groups have a long way to go to break down the barriers but you have to start somewhere.

sally.woodbury@gypsy-traveller.org

The Sun

You may remember the article in The Sun which suggested that a group of Gypsies had damaged a police helicopter.

Following the success of Emma Nuttall's complaint, we met with an Editor and requested that The Sun be more balanced in their coverage of Gypsy/ Traveller issues.

The Editor informed us that The Sun had recently banned the use of the word 'pikery' and that a memo had been sent informing staff of this.

Bequest

Pablo Rehin, a former volunteer for FFT sadly died last year. He was a long time and committed supporter of the organization. He helped FFT in the early days, donating both his time and money.

We were contacted by Pablo's sister Helen Rehin who informed us that Pablo had left a bequest to FFT. The money will be put to very good use in our work on behalf of Travelling communities.

Computer Grants

The government have announced a scheme to provide computers and internet access to children from low-income families.

The Home Start grant is available to provide a PC or laptop, basic software and a year's free broadband access through a 3G dongle, which doesn't require landline access.

If you qualify for free school dinners you are likely to qualify for a grant.

If you think you are eligible for a Home Access Grant

and would like to apply please call the **Home Access Grant Helpline on 0333 200 1004** for an application form

Planning Success

Two planning appeals at which we have appeared as a witness within the last two months in Sussex have achieved temporary planning permission of three years and two and a half years respectively.

The first site is within the South Downs National Park and the second in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

New Staff at FFT

Over the past couple of months, largely due to funding that we have received from Government under the Tackling Race Inequalities programme, we have been able to welcome six fantastic new members of staff to FFT.

Henry Chapman, a Romany Gypsy, is our new Community Engagement Worker and is working to promote the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in local democratic processes – not just through electoral registration, important though this is, but also through encouraging local councils to be more proactive about involving the Travelling communities in their participative and

consultative programmes.

Sally Woodbury, a Romany Gypsy based in Somerset, is our Community Development Worker for the South West Region and is working to give support to Gypsy and Traveller groups in the region as well as trying to establish Traveller Forums where these do not currently exist.

Candy Sheridan, an Irish Traveller and a North Norfolk Councillor, is undertaking the same role in the East of England.

Michelle Buck, also part of the Irish Traveller community, is our new Caseworker based in our offices in Brighton. She is taking over the casework role from Abbie Kirkby

allowing Abbie to do community development work in the South East.

Liz MacPherson is our new Training Officer. Although not from a Travelling community, Liz has worked with Gypsies and Travellers for many years in a voluntary capacity as part of GAIT.

Last but not least our most recent appointment is Siobhan McSorley, who has been recruited to a part-time caseworker post. This will enable us to do more capacity building arising out of casework, so that as well as helping people solve their immediate problems and issues, we can go a step further in equipping them to tackle future problems for themselves.

We have been fortunate to recruit such great people to the FFT team and it brings the total staff complement of FFT to nineteen, of whom nine are from the travelling communities (Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers).

Our aspiration though is not to keep increasing in size but rather to be as collaborative and supportive as possible towards all the other Gypsy/Traveller organisations that are fighting against all odds to bring an end to the racism and discrimination that Gypsies and Travellers experience as part of their everyday existence.

Together we can and will make a difference.

Training

Part of FFT's work is to help other organisations to work better with Gypsies and Travellers.

Over the past few years most of our staff and lots of community speakers have been involved with educating or training other organisations in one way or another.

Currently we are involved with training Local Authority elected members and Health Authority Local

Involvement Network (LINK) boards.

We are very committed to improving the awareness of decision makers. Local Authority members have the final say on whether new sites get built and give planning consent to new private sites (or not as has often been the case).

Without building the knowledge and understanding of elected members, we are unlikely

to get the permanent sites which are the accommodation of choice for many Gypsies and Travellers.

The LINK boards help Health Authorities to decide their priorities for healthcare and how services are best provided to patients. With the shocking health outcomes experienced by Gypsies and Travellers, it is critical for Health Providers to understand the needs and preferences of Gypsies

and Travellers to begin to address these inequalities. We are also working with LINK boards to help them welcome Gypsy and Traveller members to join their work.

A welcome feedback from our training is the number of people who have Gypsy or Traveller ancestry and are happy to share their stories and old family photos - sometimes for the first time.

Noticeboard

Land for Sale

Full consent for Traveller family. Occupancy for life.

On the outskirts of March in Cambridgeshire. 3.5 acres mainly to grazing, post & rail fencing on the road sides. Mains electric, water & phone, propane gas tank on site & septic tank.

40ft by 30ft mobile home, 4 bed, 2 double & 2 single, full size bathroom, kitchen diner & large lounge. To the rear is a veranda, patio area & large garden laid to lawn with flower beds, enclosed with a timber fence.

Outside there are two plots for static caravans all with sewer, electric & water in place. In the yard itself there are four stables, four dog runs & a tack room all with electric. A 40ft by 25ft barn also with electric. The property can be accessed by two driveways both of which are gated. Contact Mark Lowe on: 01354 740 959 or 0759599471 or email: crvrdns@aol.com

Land for Sale

D Hislop has land for sale near Stowmarket Suffolk approx 7 acres.
Contact:
Stephen.hislop@btinternet.com

Photography Exhibition

An exhibition of photographs by Eva Sajovich is on at the 198

Gallery at 198 Raiton Road, SE24 OJT. It is called *Be-Longing: Travellers Stories, Travellers Lives*. Eva's exhibition includes photographs of people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in London & Slovenia. The gallery is open from 11-5pm Mon-Fri, and on Sat 6th & 20th March. On Thurs 18th March from 7-9pm there will be a screening of the film *Romano Hip Hop* by R Point, and on the 20th March from 6-9pm there will be a closing event with music.



PHOTO : EVA SAJOVIC AT THE 198 GALLERY AT THE OPENING EVENT OF BE-LONGING: TRAVELLERS STORIES, TRAVELLERS LIVES

Gypsy & Traveller Law course

Shelter course on the law relating to accommodation issues that affect Gypsies & Travellers. It includes planning law, enforcement actions, appeals, security of tenure on official sites, evictions from unauthorised encampments and homelessness as it relates to Travellers.

30-31 March 2010
Prices £370 commercial, £345 standard, £295 concessionary.

Romany Activist Publishes Memoir

Maggie Smith-Bendell's memoir has just been published. Her book: *Our*

Forgotten Years: A Gypsy Woman's Life on the Road is published by The University of Hertfordshire Press and costs £8.99.

GRTHM Event Brighton

Saturday 12 June 10 am to 4pm. Sussex Police Gypsy and Traveller Independent Advisory Group event in the Brighthelm Centre to celebrate Gypsy & Traveller History Month.

There will be music, food, stalls, competitions, crafts, exhibitions, films and other events.

www.grthm.co.uk

Kent Horse Fair & Auction

10th & 11th April 2010. Fair and auction open to the public.

Trade stalls welcome, auction starts at 1:30pm Sun 11th, ring for details.

Raspberry Hill Park Farm, Raspberry Hill Lane, Iwade, Sittingbourne, Kent. ME9 8SL

Contact: Kevin Harrington
Phone: 07807 365985
Mobile: Ted 07737 849417

Documentary

I am looking to make an observational documentary about the housing problem faced by the Gypsy/Traveller community. I hope to raise awareness by following the lives of three different children and their families. I would be so grateful if people in the following situations would be interested in talking to me:

One family that have been rehoused in bricks and mortar and are distressed / anxious about it.

One family on an illegal pitch.

One family on a council approved pitch.

More than ever, now is the time for the Gypsy & Traveller story to be heard. For too long racism, homelessness and inequality in the education and health care system have been facts of life. With an open heart and a pensive, reflective approach, this film will allow real life family stories to be told.

This will not just be a political tale. Through different generations the film will take an honest look at how the Travelling community live, a chance to share their world, hopes and dreams.

The film will take a serious look at the problem of finding a sense of self in modern times. Alongside their parents fight for a safe and stable home, we will also follow the children's first steps in understanding their own identity and relationship to the world around them.

If anyone is interested in a non-obligation chat to find about more about myself and what I hope to achieve with the film, please feel free to contact me on:

07747462961
Rebecca.Mills.2009@live.rhul.ac.uk

Friends, Families and Travellers

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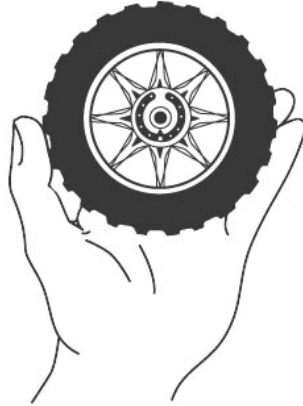
Charity no. 111 2326
Company 3597515

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.Gypsy-Traveller.org

for information, useful contacts and more.



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.

National Contacts

For more contacts please phone or visit www.gypsy-traveller.org/contacts.htm

Traveller Advice Team (TAT)

0845 120 2980
07768 316755 24hr

Community Legal Advice

0845 345 4 345

Family Rights Group

0800 731 1696

Shelter (homeless)

0808 800 4444

Squatters Advisory Service

020 7359 8814

The Traveller Law Reform Project

www.travellerslaw.org.uk

Travellers Aid Trust

www.travellersaidtrust.org

The Gypsy Council

01708 868986

National Association of Gypsy Women

01325 240033

National Romany Rights

Tel. 01202 893228

Pavee Point

00 353 1 878 0255

Children's Society, South-West

01761 411771

Groundswell

Tel: 020 7737 5500
info@groundswell.org.uk

National Association of Boat Owners

01749 677195

Equality & Human Rights Commission

020 9390000

Planning Aid

01963 230045

Education Otherwise -

enquiries@educationotherwise.org

The Travellers' School Charity

Tel 07717 055378

Roma Support Group

020 7511 5721

If you believe that everyone should have the right to travel and to stop without constant fear of persecution because of their lifestyle: JOIN FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND TRAVELLERS NOW!

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: _____

Waged-£10.00 Unwaged-£5.00 Organisation-£25.00 / or Donation

I do not wish to join FFT, but please accept a donation towards the work you carry out

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 made available to others without your consent.