



Friends, Families & Travellers’ Newsletter

HIGH- LIGHTS

- ♦ Traveller Law Reform Bill
- ♦ Traveller Women’s Health Project
- ♦ ODPM report highlights

Management Committee Meetings:

Saturday 8th March
Saturday 26th April

FFT AGM:

Saturday 14th June

Newsletter layout, re-
search, writing and
compilation:

Anna

Proof-reading and final edit:

Alex and Emma

Tess the Traveller *Hot off the Press!*

We are delighted to announce that the ‘Tess the Traveller’ story books have finally been printed and are being prepared for distribution. The storybooks, originally conceived by Fiona Earle of Educational Advice for Travellers (EAT) are aimed at children between the ages of 3 and 7 and present a culturally friendly publication for Traveller children of all backgrounds.

The books, funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, come in a set of ten stories based on the adventures of a Traveller called Tess, her son Toby and their dog Teabag. The books are illustrated by Lol Golding, a Traveller based in Somerset who is gaining a growing reputation as an extremely successful artist in the South West.

The story books will be distributed free to Travellers either directly or through other Gypsy and Traveller organisation as well as being sold to Traveller Education Services nationally and anyone else who wants a set. The money raised from the sale of books will go towards the costs of producing the next series.

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who helped out on this project and especially to Debbie Harvey of the Children’s Society and Cathy Kiddle of Devon Traveller Education Services.

Please turn to page 7 for an order form. If you do not wish to order a set for yourself, you may wish to pass on the order form to your local library or school, or any Travellers who you think may be interested!

The Fourth Traveller Law Reform Conference

This year has seen the fourth and final Traveller Law Reform conference to be held by the Traveller Law Research Unit (TLRU). The conference, which as usual was a real success, also signalled the closure of TLRU at Cardiff University and the departure of Rachel Morris and Luke Clements. For all of us who have worked in this field over the last six years and more, this is a truly sad loss. Although Luke will still be around, Rachel is off to do a little travelling (around the world) herself. We wish her all the best and hope that we’ll be hearing from her again in the not too distant future.

Support the Traveller Law Reform Bill

A father pleads with bailiffs to stop the eviction. His son desperately clings to the underneath of the caravan to stop bailiffs towing away his home. Hours later their home is demolished and ablaze.

“A litmus test of society’s commitment to equality and fairness is how it treats the most excluded. Current evidence with regard to the Traveller Community suggests we are failing.” — Rodney Bickerstaffe

The Traveller Law Reform Bill was drafted by the Traveller Law Research Unit at Cardiff University and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The Traveller community was widely consulted in the drafting process. Last year the Conservative MP David Atkinson gave the bill its first reading. Amongst its many provisions it calls for:

- ◆ **Every local authority to provide or facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation (temporary and permanent) for Gypsies and Travellers.**
- ◆ **Non discrimination under an amended Race Relations Act for all Travellers.**
- ◆ **Housing Corporation Funding and new housing association powers for caravan site construction.**
- ◆ **Security of tenure on Gypsy caravan sites**
- ◆ **Greater educational opportunities for Travellers.**

Who Are The Travellers?

The Traveller Community in England and Wales is composed of Gypsies and Irish Travellers and other Traveller groups. There are said to number 90-120,000 nomadic Travellers but according to some as many as a further 200,00 of Traveller ancestry are living in housing. The exact figure

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Please note that the views expressed in articles or any other material contributed to the FFT newsletter are not necessarily those of Friends, Families and Travellers.

is difficult to estimate as their numbers are not recorded accurately in census records.

The Issue

During the post war period as a result of increased development and changes in the law, Traveller families, many of whom were forced off land they owned, found it increasingly difficult to find stopping places. This brought them into greater conflict with the settled community.

In 1968 the Caravan Sites Act placed a duty on Local Authorities to establish sites for the Traveller community. Provision only began to grow rapidly with the allocation of 100% grants from central government in 1980 following the recommendation of the Cripps Commission.

In 1994 the then Conservative government introduced the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, which released Local Authorities from the duty to provide sites and has led to a reduction in provision, as some sites have closed and the Traveller community has grown. Travellers were told that a 'level playing field' would exist and they were advised to buy their own land. However over 90% of planning applications are refused as opposed to 20% for the sedentary community.

It is now estimated that over 30% of the Traveller community live on unauthorised sites; having nowhere to stop they are sometimes forced to occupy public places. Some of these cause extreme inconvenience for the housed community. These poor living conditions have a negative impact on the health of the Traveller community. The British Medical Association has reported that the

The Future

These Traveller children have been evicted from land their families own. What future if any do policy makers envisage for these children?

Traveller community is the most at risk health group in the UK. They have the lowest life expectancy and the highest infant mortality rates in the UK. A lack of stopping places also has a disruptive impact on Traveller children's education. Furthermore OFSTED has recognised that many Traveller children suffer from relentless bullying in school and have low levels of

educational achievement and high rates of illiteracy.

The costs of dealing with unauthorised sites is estimated to be £18 million pounds per annum. This is an unsustainable use of resources. We strongly believe that such resources would represent 'best value' for money by being spent on the implementation of the Traveller Law Reform Bill.

The Government's Proposals

The Government announced its own proposals amounting to £17 million for the period 2001 to 2004, of which £8 million is left and will be made available to fund the refurbishment of sites and temporary transit sites. The police will be given increased powers to direct Travellers to these temporary transit sites, and increased powers of eviction will not be allowed in Local Authorities where there is an absence of these extra sites. merely be pushed from pillar to post. Such a policy would also not further social inclusion as

Although the Traveller Law Reform Coalition welcome any measure that increases the

Continued on next page...

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availability of sites, without more residential and private sites we believe that under Government

proposals many Travellers will merely be pushed from pillar to post. Such a policy would also not further social inclusion, as temporary sites will not enable Traveller children to attend school or to become part of the community.

They will continue to feel unwanted and excluded and this will do little to eliminate alleged anti-social behaviour, which is a consequence of long term social exclusion.

Government research into the provision and condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England, published in October 2002, estimates that an additional 1—2000 pitches on Local Authority Sites are needed to address the current shortfall. Maintenance and improvement expenditure needed to bring existing sites up to standard and maintain them at this level over the next thirty years is estimated by the research to be £123.5 Million.

Under these proposals Travellers will remain the most excluded group in society

You can help by:

- ◆ **Writing to or calling your Local MP and encouraging him or her to sign the Early Day Motion (EDM number 44) tabled by Kevin McNamara calling for support for the Traveller Law Reform Bill.**
- ◆ **Ask him or her to support the Traveller Law Reform Bill as proposed by David Atkinson MP, which will be given a second reading in parliament in May this year.**
- ◆ **Joining the Traveller Law Reform Bill Coalition, who meet regularly and campaign for the implementation of the Bill.**

Please find an example letter and flyer which you may wish to sign and send to your MP on page 20. This can be photocopied (back to back) and distributed to whoever you think may be interested. For more information please contact Emma Nuttall at FFT on 01273 234777.

Government Policy on Gypsy and Traveller encampments wastes millions of pounds annually

A new book published by the Traveller Law Research Unit at Cardiff University, states that local government, the police, landowners and Travelling People spend at least £18 million annually on moving Gypsies and Travellers from unauthorised encampments; and that is not 'best value'.

Co-author of the report Rachel Morris said: "It is at least as expensive to evict people as it would be ensure adequate lawful stopping places. The law was changed in 1994 so that there was no duty on local authorities to make such places available. At the time it was said that public site provision was far too expensive. This government has kept the law as amended in place but has never checked how much it costs not to provide sites".

Although the Government launched a major review of housing law and policy in 2000, no meaningful changes to policy relating to accommodation for Travelling People appear imminent. Yet this comprehensive study by the TLRU—the first ever undertaken—of the costs associated with unauthorised encampments ***At what cost? The economics of Gypsy and Traveller encampments*** by Rachel Morris and Luke Clements is published by The Policy Press (www.policypress.org.uk). The book is available from: Marston Book Services, PO Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4YN.

Tel: 01235 465500 Fax: 01235 465556
Email: direct.orders@marston.co.uk
Price £18.99 (plus £2.75 p&p).

ODPM research highlights need for pitches

A report presented By Pat Niner to the ODPM in October of last year clearly indicates the lack of council maintained site provision for gypsies and Travellers on a national level. The report, *The Provision and Condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, contains the following key summaries, drawing upon the research carried out by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham:

- ◆ There is no clear, widely understood national policy towards accommodation for Gypsies and other Travellers in England; there is a general feeling that such a policy is needed involving local authorities and others but with a strong lead from central government.
- ◆ There are around 320 local authority sites providing about 5,000 pitches. It is important that the existing network is retained, and currently closed sites brought back into use. Expenditure of £16.78 million is needed over the next five years to bring sites to standard, and at similar or higher levels thereafter. Spending at this level cannot be met from site income.
- ◆ We estimate that between 1,000 and 2,000 additional residential pitches will be needed over the next five years. Between 2,000 and 2,500 additional pitches on transit sites or stopping places will also be needed to accommodate nomadism. The latter need to form a national network. There is little agreement about the feasibility and viability of transit sites.
- ◆ There are obvious barriers to site provision, especially through resistance from the settled community. Many believe that a statutory duty and central subsidy are needed to 'encourage' local authorities to make provision. Treating site provision in the same way as housing for planning purposes could help.
- ◆ Site management is more intensive than is usual for social housing management and requires higher staff/resident ratios. It

should be 'firm but fair'. There are areas where greater formality might be introduced, including performance monitoring.

- ◆ In some areas there is a problem arising from the way that some Rent Officers set local reference rents for housing benefit applications for County Council sites. In some cases this causes large differences between the pitch fee charged and the amount payable by housing benefit. The anomaly in the treatment of sites for housing benefit purposes according to site owner status should be removed as quickly as possible.

Copies of the report are available from :
The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7NB
Tel: 0870 1226 236 Fax: 0870 1226 237

Alternatively the report can be viewed online at: <http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk/information/gypsy/provision/index.htm>

ODPM Draft Framework Guide on Managing Unauthorised Gypsy/Traveller Encampments.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has sent out it's Draft Framework Guide for consultation, with the deadline for submissions at the end of February. We are worried about the negative and pejorative tone of the Framework Guide, and it's failure to adequately address how more sites will be provided. We will keep you updated

Calling All Traveller Women....

FFT to launch Traveller Women's Health Project

Would you like the chance to learn the skills that could improve the health of your community? FFT are delighted to announce that out of 600 other applicants, our Traveller Women's Health Project is one of 45 to be selected for funding from the Department of Health.

We are now looking for up to 12 Sussex based Traveller women to participate in the programme, which will start in September. The courses will run for nine months for one day a week and expenses will be covered. Most importantly Travellers will be instrumental in deciding what they need from the course.

Zoe Matthews, who is the driving force behind the project, says: 'I stumbled upon FFT having recently returned from a project at Pavee Point in Dublin, which was working with Irish Travellers to train them to become Community Health Workers within their own community. I had always wanted to see a project similar to that at Pavee Point set up over here. And now the opportunity has finally arisen! '

**If you are interested in taking part please
contact Zoe at the office on 01273 234777 for more details.**

With thanks to Zoe Matthews, National Policy Development Officer

ON YER TRAVELS, HAVE YOU COME ACROSS...

- **GOOD GARAGE SERVICES**
- **NON-RIP OFF PRICES**
- **AUTO-ELECTRICIANS**
- **ACCESSIBILITY TO SPARES AND REPAIRS**
- **AMAZING MECHANICS**

IF SO, PLEASE LET US KNOW! - THE SPARES FILE IS RUN BY YOU...FOR YOU!

Hello folks...!

Did you have a good Summer? I hope so. Mine was spent travelling in Wales looking for a home base and no one will believe this but in nine weeks I experienced five rainy days! I've always told my friends that if I keep moving the sun shines on me, and if I stay still it pees down, if you know what I mean!

Now in this file, here and now, I'm going to open my "Quote of the Year Tribute". And it goes to Jake Bowers, whose excellent article "Between a Rock and a Stopping Place", states in part 2 (printed in the last newsletter):

"There have always been Travellers in this country, and there always will be. I have no doubt that in the future there will be Travellers whose ancestors were computer programmers." And I'll add: "And maybe even those whose ancestors were politicians...!"

Thank you, Jake, you've really cheered me up! A lot of us know exactly what it feels like to be between a rock and a stopping place. Living in / owning / renting a house / property is not an automatic privilege. For many in GB, and for many others, it is a way of getting 'lumbered'. Owning land is fine if your face fits and your money can grease the right palms. Otherwise you're second class, Last in the queue, and not a "citizen" by choice of **NO** choice! Increasing

evictions of Romany people from their own land is the only proof I need that I am **NOT** living in a compassionate society. However, we **CAN** keep trying to help each other, by sharpening our wits on the scissors used to snip red tape here and there—when we get the chance—chipping away at the old block...! My next block-chipper will be introduced in the next issue or so, namely the "Are you spare? File...!!?". Meanwhile here is a special report about the Converted Classics Club (West Wales).

The Converted classics club (west wales) First rally of the "triple c"

From 16th—18th August 2002, I attended the first club meeting of this brand new rally club for people with an inclination towards the Travelling lifestyle. Having said this, the main criteria is to bring together people from all walks of life who share a common interest in any vehicle mutated from its original specifications to suit another purpose—whatever that may be. The new club intends to welcome the wacky and the bizarre. So whether it's a fire engine made into a wrecker truck, a hearse in to a pick-up, a military 4 x 4 into a logging tractor, a bus into a home, or a transit running on chip fat, they want to hear from you! They are a private members club with a website and online newsletters, and intend organising a series of runs and rallies in the Summer months for members to get their rigs fired up, swap ideas, and above all, have a good time.!

Continued on next page...

P.T.O

...continued from page 7

Which we did! The first rally site, a spacious, flat field with good access, 3 miles north east of Carmarthen, had lovely views of hills and woodland. It was a pleasant, friendly, well-organised event, and we were blessed with mainly hot, sunny days and quite a few stars in clear or cloud-scattered skies. On Saturday 17th August the Club's AGM opened the event. I took the spares file and received a lot of interest.

Though all sorts of supporting entertainment is intended, the main focus for "Triple C" rallies will always be the vehicles. There will be shows, demos, displays, stalls, music and a prize-giving on the main stage for such categories as "Best Engineering" thru to "Maddest Conversion", and competitions may include 4 x 4 tug o' war, fire engine racing, etc...

The "Triple C" is a non-profit making organisation and as such expects all members to contribute *something* to their set-up, whether it be the loaning of a marquee, setting up the kids area or putting on some kind of display. They will regularly update their website with photos, articles and items of interest, and encourage all members to send in photos of their vehicles with a brief history, so they can be scanned onto the website vehicle register / photo gallery.

What did I like about this first rally? Well, let's see...There was a Mingu's choccy cake for starters, there being a couple of birthdays happening...Robert's door to door tractor delivery of spring water...the tug o' war was most entertaining when the rope broke twice (watch it on Jeremy Beadle's show if you're stil desperate enough to watch TV)...it didn't half get hot on Friday and Monday...it didn't half pee it down in time to the varied sound system on Saturday night...the field was perfectly flat all over!...Anthony's sack race, egg 'n' spoon and limbo for kids of all ages (amongst other energetic efforts)...the acoustic music session around Mark's fire with Ian (of "How We Got There" fame) and Anthony (of "Robin Hood" notoriety). Anthony is of the Welsh Gypsy Hearne family who came over from Romania several hundred years ago...and the vehicles! Oh yes, the vehicles!

If you want to know more you can contact Stef Pickles (Secretary) on 01269 870337 or email rleaderccc@hotmail.com. Or try www.convertedclassics.co.uk

"How We Got There"

By Ian, Jackie and Sali the pup
(in a 1978 LWB Dodge / Commer Walkthru)"

"Having spent a long time travelling in Wales, we were finally M.O.T.'d and legal, and were on our way to Gloucestershire, heading for Cornwall when we pulled in for the night on a layby near Llandovery to fix a leaking core plug. Sian, a Traveller, passed and stopped, asking if we were OK and if we were heading for the "Triple C". "The...what?" we said, intrigued, and she went on to explain about the club and the AGM. It sounded 'right up our street and in our field'. So we turned around next day and headed for the site a few miles away. Magical synchronicity!...Fantastic! We had a wonderful chilled out time and met some great new people—like us, mad enough to keep some amazing old rigs on the road. Of course, we joined up—Membership No. 46, and will proudly display our badge on our travels and encourage others to join... (The "Triple C" are hoping that members will form their own local groups—Viv)...We'll definitely be back next year, and a bit more prepared—doing an acoustic jam space... (Yippee! - Viv)...fire twirling, and display some art and craft stuff with any luck!" Thank Ian and Jacki—Viv.

SPARES FILE AT THE RALLY SITE

- ◆ Leyland E.A. Parts—contact Nansi: Nansi@talk21.co.uk
- ◆ Mark, based at Forest of Dean / Wye Valley: 07721 039763 or recycledpsv@02.co.uk. Can fix and source Good knowledge of Leyland 1/2 cab deckers (Titan PD0. Access to bus workshop manuals. M.O.T. preparation and testing. Auto-electrician components sourced, re-wiring, period electrical components sourced. Fair rates. Looking for park-up for rent/to buy. Forest of Dean / Wye Valley. Towing, recovery—low loaderlift can be arranged. Looking to buy a bus? Especially deckers. I can help. Have

contacts. (Mark brought a 1963 Bedford VAS 1 Marshall “Cambrette” body single decker to the rally—Viv).e parts for buses and trucks.

Bye for now folks,

**VIV'S SPARES FILE
C/O FLAT 2, RHISTON
STREET ROAD
GLASTONBURY, SOMERSET
BA6 9EQ
Tel: 01458 832 023**

Due to lack of space there will be a bumper spares file in the next issue...

ROMA NATION DAY

8th April 2003

ROMALEN!

**Once again, we are preparing to celebrate our
Nation Day.**

**The day we demonstrate to the world our brotherhood,
our unity and common destiny.**

UK plans to celebrate this year's Roma Nation Day include:

- ◆ A rally at the Epping Forest tomb of the famous preacher Gypsy Smith, led by a grandson of Pastor Smith, Sonny Gibard, of Gypsies for Christ. Those wishing to take part should call the Gypsy Council on 01708 868986 nearer the date for further details.
- ◆ A Public Inquiry at Epping Town Hall into the future of the private Paynes Lane Caravan Park, scheduled for 8th April, is also likely to draw attention: A protest against attempts by Epping Council to imprison owners of the land—including Mrs Delaney and her triplets—is planned.
- ◆ Depending on developments in Basildon, which has vowed to close part of the Dale Farm Travellers' village, other Roma Nation Day events may take place in the vicinity.

THAR MOMELI!

This year, alongside the many big traditional rallies that will be taking place, mostly in central and eastern Europe, our brothers and sisters in India wish to add their light to the occasion. We here shall be rising at dawn on 8 April and gathering to light candles - that our little flames may lighten the way, and guide you on Roma Nation Day.

Let those who wish, light candles with us, that our



may pass around the world!

Beginning in India, where our nation has its roots, let the Candles be lit! And we are thinking - in addition to all our people in Europe, in North and South America — of those who have So recently sent messages from Iran, from Turkey, Jordan and Georgia. Especially is this a call to all the Romani communities of the Community of Independent States and Baltic Countries, who have just successfully concluded their Great Congress in Smolensk.

**LET US ALL LIGHT CANDLES ON ROMA NATION DAY!
THAT THE WORLD MAY SEE THE LIGHT WE BRING!**

ENDORSED BY:

**All India Banjara Seva Sangh, Indian Institute of Roma Studies,
Trans-European Roma Federation, Europe-Roma, Roma Opre.**

PLEASE ADD YOUR NAME

Ustiben.5@ntlworld.com

TESS THE TRAVELLER

written by
Fiona Earle & Ross Heulin
Illustrated by
Loll Golding

**A series of ten story books for
and about Travellers for
children between the age of
three and seven**

“What are you all doing?” asked Toby. “You look like you’ve lost something.”

“We have,” replied Ali glumly. “We’ve lost Jan’s juggling balls. We’ve got a show for school children this afternoon, and we need to find them.”

“Can’t you use some oranges, or tennis balls or something?” asked Tess.

“We will if we have to,” answered Jan, “but these are special. One is the sun, one is the moon and one is planet earth.”

Everyone looked fed up.

“I’ll look for them,” offered Toby, “then you can all go and get ready.”

“That would be great,” said Sandy. “We’ve searched this tent thoroughly, but haven’t had time to look anywhere else.”

“Leave it to me!” said Toby confidently.

Produced by
Educational Advice for Travellers
In partnership with
The Travellers Aid Trust
&
Friends, Families and Travellers

This project was funded in full by Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales



EDUCATIONAL ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS
C/O FFT
Community Base, 113 Queens Road,
Brighton BN1 3XG

'TESS THE TRAVELLER' STORY BOOKS ORDER FORM

Name/Organisation: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code _____

'Tess the Traveller' story books come individually or as a set. The titles are:

'Tess at the Horsefair'

'Tess at the Circus'

Tess at the Car Boot Sale'

'Tess at the Green Gathering'

'Tess Cleans up'

'Tess and the Flat Tyre'

'Tess at the Party'

'Tess and the Snowy Day'

'Tess Has Visitors'

'Tess Goes on a Ferry'

We have a limited number of sets available to split. Sets cost £35.00, and individual books cost £3.50, plus P & P (£1.25 for up to 5 books, £2.50 for 6-10 books)

Please send me:

QTY : _____ set/s of 'Tess the Traveller' story books and / or

THE INDIVIDUAL TITLES I HAVE CIRCLED ABOVE

SUBTOTAL £ _____

P & P £ _____

TOTAL £ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO FFT AND SEND ORDERS TO THE
ABOVE ADDRESS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDER.

Educational Advice for Travellers is supported by The Travellers Aid Trust (registered charity no. 299463) and is an umbrella project of Friends, Families and Travellers which is registered in England and Wales as a company (non-profit voluntary organisation) limited by guarantee no. 3597515 - registered office address: 36 Queens Park Terrace, Brighton BN2 2YA.

A Gypsy Upbringing

By Tony Price

A fascinating insight into a Gypsy's lifestyle

Tony Price claims this book has been written primarily to help in the education of travelling children (he suggests 9 years plus), but it makes a fascinating read for children and adults of all cultures.

It is an honest, first hand account of growing up and living in the Romani culture. The text is illustrated with about 100 black and white photographs, from long dogs and wagons to a classic family pose in front of an 'FG'. The style is very entertaining, with numerous amusing anecdotes.

Tony describes in detail how his father used to take him out to work when he was a lad, and all the skills and ingenuity they used to earn a crust.

There is also a section on making wooden and paper flowers, a traditional craft passed down through generations.

All in all a good read, and something interesting to show your non-travelling friends!

The book contains 72 pages, and is A5 size with Perfect Binding.

Price £6.50 + £1 Postage and Packaging (U.K.)

T. Price Gypsy Book,
17a Witham Drive,
Chapel Hill, Lincoln, LN4 4PY
Telephone: 01526 342031

Thanks to Rob Torkington for this review

The Gypsies' Troubles

An Autobiographical Article by

XXXX

This moral contains true facts and has yet to be finished. I, x, would like to share my dreams with people in the same position as myself.

Since the age of 9 years old I had a good life, until one day my parents went their separate ways. My dad found some other woman by the name of Sarah, and my mum found another man by the name of George. At the time of the separation all of us children lived with our dad, and our mother used to come visit us and spend time with us.

But then after a while our mum hardly seen us, and we started to wonder why she never came. But then we realised that our step mum and our real mum never got on together.

We ended up moving from one place to another, and never really settled for a while. After some time moving about we happened to settle in a flat with 3 bedrooms, which done 5 boys and 5 girls, my father and our step mum.

In the year of 1992, my father passed away after a car crash and I ended up an alcoholic and smoking cannabis a lot, and ended up becoming homeless. From 1992 until 1998 I was always in trouble and started selling drugs to help me survive the problems I had.

In 1998 I met a girl by the name of Karen and I thought the skies opened up. She had 2 kids for me, but since I met Karen my life was not the same. I had to steal from people to feed my children because she did not know how to look after them. I had a job selling carpets and lino, just like us Travellers has to do to feed a family but that was not good enough in her eyes, and so I went begging for to keep food on the table but that was not good enough. She said 'You're making a

show of me this way'. So I ended up robbing for to keep her happy, so she could have what she wanted and clothe the children for what money I got every night.

After all my robbing I had to finally pack up and run to England, where I have been for the past 2 and a half years.

Since I arrived in England my ex-partner Karen has been sleeping with a lot of men behind my back. We met up with a couple of Irish folks and they seemed alright for a while. Then we got our house in Handsworth in the Birmingham area, in which we were for at least a year, or 2 maybe as I cannot recall.

I got into buying and selling cars again, but every time I was out she never cleaned the house or fed the children, and always left their dirty nappies lying around. So I had enough and we sat down and talked things over, but even that didn't work out. So we ended up moving place again and again, until we settled in Northfield in Birmingham. The Irish couple never got involved until Karen stirred it up, saying that I was going to get the children taken off her, on the basis that I just wanted to see them. So they used to mind the children while she was out drinking every week.

When we were in Northfield I met a girl by the name of Helen, and we got lost together, and Lisa and myself was stopping with a friend of my friends. After about 2 weeks there my ex-partner got in touch to see if I would take the children, as she had hassle from the neighbours in Northfield. So I asked a friend of mine to go pick up the children although I had very little money coming in and Helen was helping me with the money problem as she was the one with her own money to support me and my son. Karen said she could manage my daughter fine, and just wanted me to mind my son for a few days. After about a week I went to Social Services. They helped me with some money for food for my son; I also managed to get him some clothes from other places as I was told by police to stay out of Northfield or they would set me up on

things I could not imagine, and I would be sent down for months; 'Either you stay away or we'll put you away',

Two days later as there were no orders for me to keep away from my children I went to see them, but she told them I had gone mad and was trying to kill them. So, because I had a hammer in the car they charged me with it as an offensive weapon and I was brought to court on it. Not long after that I saw 2 fellows ditch a car and took it, so me and Helen could have a better life somewhere else, but we ended up getting arrested.

Not long after that we came up to Manchester and have been in and out of trouble ever since. But now the police are harassing me with charges that they renew and hold until they're in touch with other officers that have arrested me. They then put these charges forward to the court instead of leaving me alone and let me live my life, like everyone deserves a chance to do.

Now it is the year 2002 and I have been locked up for an assault that I never done on April 21st this year. I have to face court again September 25th, and cannot see my children who have been in care since October 10th when I last saw them. Since that date I have been fighting for them, but it is their mother who says no as she is the one with parental rights, which I have not got because I was nor married to her. This is an unfair decision by the government of any country to my knowledge. I cannot read or write or spell properly but I *do* know how to raise my children with the regard and welfare they need. For nearly one year those children have been in care, and if their mother really cared that much why not take them before, as I have applied for custody. She is putting assault charges against me, and I think the Police and Social and had no intention of doing so.

Continued on next page...

Family Rights Group

Advice Line

0800 731 1696

**Monday—Friday
1.30pm to 3.30pm**

We offer free advice and information to families where social services are involved with a child in the family. This may be in relation to child protection concerns or when a child is looked after by the local authority or when family support services are needed. Callers speak in confidence to a social worker or solicitor who is able to send advice sheets and other publications free of charge.

**Family Rights Group
The Print House
18 Ashwin Street
London E8 3DL**

**Tel: 020 7923 2628
Fax: 020 7923 2683
Email: office@frg.org.uk**



Travellers' views welcomed on local Rights of Way

In pursuit of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Highways Authorities have to set up local access forums. These are channels whereby people can give their views and ideas regarding the rights of way network in their area.

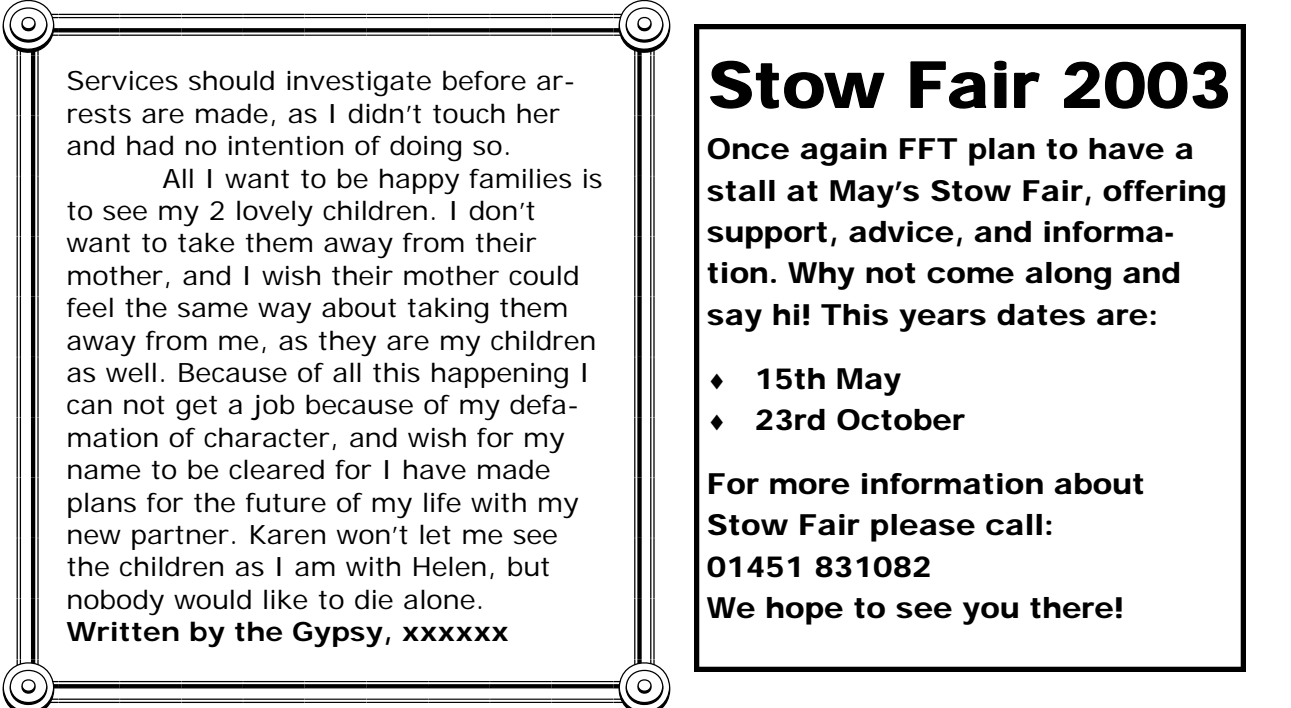
Areas for consultation include:

- ◆ Drafts of maps prepared by the Countryside Agency showing open country and registered common land
- ◆ The appointment of access wardens on land where new rights of access apply.
- ◆ Byelaws affecting access to land
- ◆ Long term restrictions on and exclusions from access
- ◆ Rights of way improvement plans prepared by the Local Authority.

Members expenses will be met, and at least 2 meetings per year should be held. The Countryside Agency are particularly looking for members of ethnic minorities to participate, as well as people with experience

of Rights of Way issues. Members must be able to act as representatives of Rights of Way users. They could also be involved with educational or health projects; with groups which have an interest; with rural businesses or tourism; with conservation or heritage; or transport if impacted upon by Rights of Way issues.

If you are interested in finding out about your nearest Local Access Forum contact your local council, or call the DEFRA helpline on 08459 3355 77



Services should investigate before arrests are made, as I didn't touch her and had no intention of doing so.

All I want to be happy families is to see my 2 lovely children. I don't want to take them away from their mother, and I wish their mother could feel the same way about taking them away from me, as they are my children as well. Because of all this happening I can not get a job because of my defamation of character, and wish for my name to be cleared for I have made plans for the future of my life with my new partner. Karen won't let me see the children as I am with Helen, but nobody would like to die alone.

Written by the Gypsy, xxxxxx

Stow Fair 2003

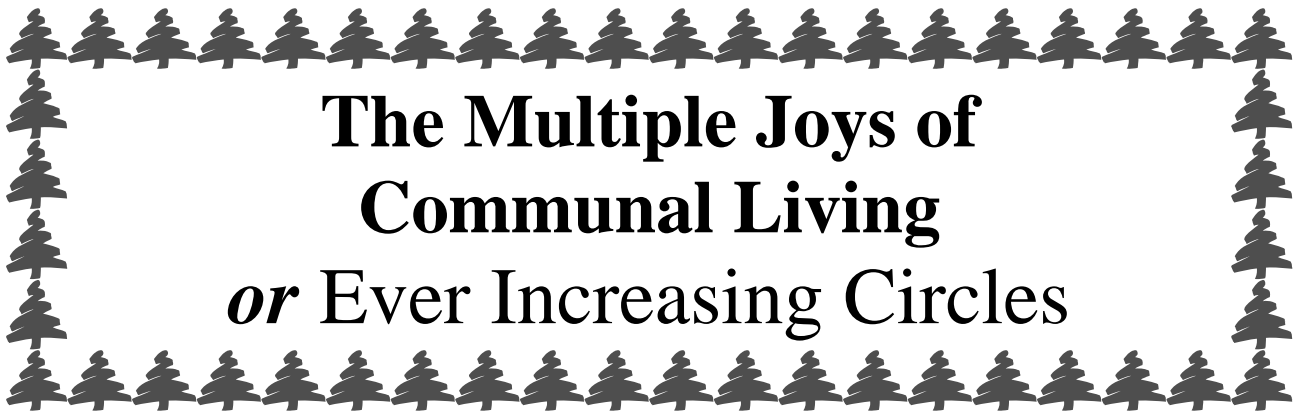
Once again FFT plan to have a stall at May's Stow Fair, offering support, advice, and information. Why not come along and say hi! This years dates are:

- ◆ 15th May
- ◆ 23rd October

For more information about Stow Fair please call:

01451 831082

We hope to see you there!



The Multiple Joys of Communal Living *or* Ever Increasing Circles

Glaneirw is a large, rambling house, cottage and farm building set in 44-46 acres, of which 20 is woodland, 20 meadow and the rest is farm and gardens. It is set in rural Ceridigion only 2 miles from the sea.

The history so far is that it was occupied by Rev Isaac Hughes in 1838 and was known as Eirw Castle. It then passed the hands of a family whose money was in South African diamonds called the Benchleys. It stayed with the family until 1929 when it was sold off. It was bought and run as a hotel until its closure in the early 1970s. It stood empty but was bought again in 1975 after 2 or 3 meetings of people interested in forming a self sufficient community. People came and went and by all accounts the groups failed to gel. In 1981 a group of outsiders variously described as squatters, hippies etc moved in, expelled the existing members and found that the right group could make it work. They put forward a proposal that the Glaneirw Housing Co-operative Ltd should be formed, and buy the property from the Glaneirw Association. They realised their dream, and grew and sold strawberries for profit.

I started travelling in 1984, because I saw the eviction of a group of Travellers from a disused RAF base in Cambridgeshire, where the group had been hand-growing wheat to be sent to the famine in Eritrea. The sack of wheat that was planted came from Glaneirw. I first heard of the place on my return from the Groundswell UK international homeless exchange in India. As co-

founder of the New Futures Association, a user lead Traveller support group, I had been asked to take part and visit people in Bombay's slums and on it's streets who had organised themselves into housing and workers co-operatives. The groups involved took part in community saving schemes, and between them with the equivalent of only pennies per capita had managed to change government policy, buy land, design and build their own homes, and go some way to provide toilet facilities for their huge populations. It was inspiring to say the least.

On my return I was told of Glaneirw, that it was in a rundown state, with only 3 members, one of whom was waiting to leave and join his girlfriend and child. New Futures arrived with other settled Travellers, and over the next 6 months most were accepted for membership with a few comings and goings. Personal disputes caused a breakdown in the winter of 2001 to 2002, with a few members calling in co-op mediators. By April 2002 a Glaneirw business plan was worked out as an agreed bottom level to start from. Those sticking by the greater vision stayed with 3 members and their friends, leaving by Summer. Those remaining got to grips with the running of the co-op, structure, paperwork, banks, sewage, clearing rubbish left behind, and repairing damage done during the winter. Fixing windows, growing vegetables organically, looking after our ducks and chickens, painting the house and networking with other co-ops and the local community.

Continued on page 21 ...

YOUNG FFT...YOUNG FFT...YOUNG FFT...YOUNG FFT

Join the Cyber Pilots!

Cyber Pilots is the new computer club for Traveller and Gypsy children all over England and Wales. Club members are helping to build the Cyber Pilots can leave messages for each other on the E-Pals noticeboard, post their drawings, pictures, photos, stories and poems on the site. FFT's Community Web Developer is visiting Cyber Pilots all over the country to help children improve their computer, internet and multi-media skills. The Denham Road Project, for example, has great computer drawings and stories about their pets.

In the near future, there are many plans for the Cyber Pilot Club, including digital photography workshops; links with mobile art projects; a display of cyber art at the Brighton Arts Festival; basic web design workshops; traditional traveller tales and much more.

Do you know any Traveller and Gypsy children who would like to join the Cyber Pilot club, and become involved in the website? The club is for 6 and 16 year olds, Gypsy or Traveller, settled or on the road. Join by emailing cyberpilots@gypsy-traveller.org, or writing to us at Cyber Pilots, FFT, Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3XG. You can even join on-line at www.gypsy-traveller-cyberpilots.org. See you in Cyber Space!"Young Gypsy and Traveller" website at www.gypsy-traveller-cyberpilots.org.



Not so Pikey now, huh?



☆ We assume it's only the nerds who get bullied, but Rosie from the West Sussex Youth Cabinet found this isn't always true.

☆ "I found that bullying is also a big issue for young Travellers. While many Travellers do admit to being bullies, they also find themselves the victims of teasing and bullying.

☆ Many young Travellers in Burgess Hill feel they do not have good relationships at school, feeling picked on, not listened to, and not supported.

☆ They said they would like more respect. This means people realising that they are different and respecting them for their differences."

☆ "I found that bullying is also a big issue for young Travellers. While many Travellers do admit to being bullies, they also find themselves the victims of teasing and bullying.

☆ Many young Travellers in Burgess Hill feel they do not have good relationships at school, feeling picked on, not listened to, and not supported.

☆ They said they would like more respect. This means people realising that they are different and respecting them for their differences."

☆ One young man had lots to say about the stereotyped image of his community: "If people were to come down here they would see a different attitude to Denham Road. We should all get together as a community we would not get picked on because we live down Denham Road. I DON'T LIKE IT!!!"

Find out more about the West Sussex Youth Cabinet in the next FFT newsletter or have a look at www.westsussex.gov.uk/youth_cabinet



Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to ask you to sign the **Early Day Motion**, which has been tabled by **Kevin McNamara MP**. The motion draws attention to the fact that the Gypsy Traveller community are the most excluded group in society.

The motion also calls upon the House of Commons to support **The Traveller Law Reform Bill**, which gained its first reading in the last session of parliament as proposed by **David Atkinson MP** and will be given its second reading in **Parliament this year**.

The Bill aims to increase the social inclusion of the Gypsy Traveller community and calls upon:

Every local authority to provide or facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation (temporary and permanent) for Gypsies and Travellers.

- **Non discrimination under an amended Race Relations Act for all Travellers**
- **Housing Corporation Funding for Caravan Site Construction**
- **Security of tenure on Gypsy caravan sites**
- **Greater protection from harassment**

We would also like to point out that the Traveller Law Reform Bill is a balanced approach, intended to also be of benefit to the settled community. At present there are not enough stopping places and sites and some Travellers are forced to occupy public places, which can disturb the settled community. The Bill will help alleviate the problem by creating more stopping places and sites.

We hope you will be able to give these matters your support and look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

.....

The Traveller Law Reform Coalition.
Please contact Friends Families & Travellers (FFT) for further information
Community Base, 113 Queens Rd. Brighton BN1 3XG. 01273 234 777

Nomadism is a Valid Way of Life!



Support The Traveller Law Reform Bill!

Are you a Gypsy / Traveller or a supporter of Traveller rights who thinks Nomadism is a valid way of life and who wants equality and social justice for Travellers?

Then contact your MP now! and ask them to support

‘The Traveller Law Reform Bill’ as proposed by David Atkinson MP and which will be given a second reading in Parliament this year! AND

Please ask them to sign Kevin McNamara’s Early day Motion #44 (already supported by over 60 MP’s)

This Bill Proposes:

- An end to enforced roadside camping and evictions
- Tenancies instead of licences on sites
- A network of permanent and transit sites .
- Proper health/welfare facilities for our families
- Proper education for our children

Sign the letter at back of this leaflet and send it to your MP or better still go to their surgery and ask for their support!

The Traveller Law Reform Coalition is made up of representatives of all Traveller Organisations and Travellers themselves. For more information or to join the Campaign please contact:

Friends Families & Travellers (FFT)
FFT, Community Base,

113 Queens Rd. Brighton BN1 3XG. Tel 01273 234 777

.....continued from page 5

They decided a new start was needed and New Futures Housing co-op was registered with a view to taking over from the old co-op,

Glaneirw is now a buzzing, hectic, warm family home without a moment's peace, unless you go out onto the land. We plan to grow and sell fruit, vegetables, plants and herbs through a worker co-operative. To provide pitches for seasonal workers, run the pottery workshop, run a glass workshop, continue to sell crafts and produce in the shop alongside a New Futures Association. To open the Victorian walled garden to the public. To continue to expand the woodland walk, a project to provide a safe footpath for children attending the local school. Renovate the farm buildings etc. The original plot continues, we are sure that Glaneirw has a mind and agenda of it's own. We have received the same label as other groups in the past, squatters, tatters and hippies, but as we work out our plans for the future, we find other plans from 1975, 1977 and 1981. In them there is lots of familiar stuff, things that's we have thought about doing ourselves. Experience is the only thing that will give the answers. It's our turn now to see what we can do.

In February 2003 we will be holding working weeks at Glaneirw. We are looking for skilled volunteers who can help with major jobs such as rewiring, plumbing, painting and building, as well as people to work in the farm, garden and woodland.

The address is:

NEW FUTURES HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

Registration number 29489

GLANEIRW

TANYGROES

CARDIGAN SA43 2HP

Phone or fax on 01239 810548

Mobiles 07880 758713 / 07900 388340



'GYPSY' NUMBERPLATE FOR SALE

If anyone is interested in purchasing this unique numberplate, please contact: Gerard & Judit Locesi-Campbell, 23 South Eastern Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9TR. Tel: 01843 583058 / 07816 450191

LEYLAND DAF FOR SALE

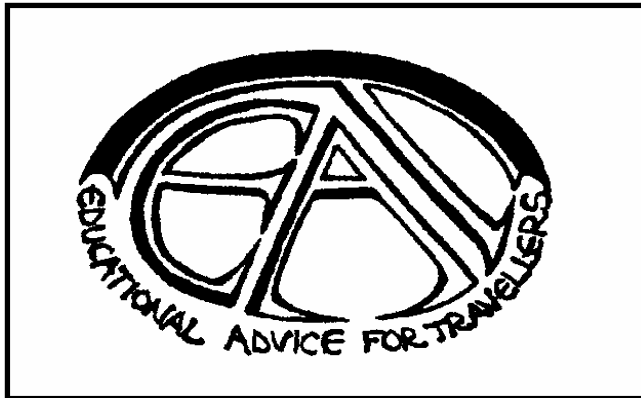
- ♦ 1991
- ♦ 7.5 Tonnes
- ♦ 18ft long
- ♦ Fully fitted out box,
- ♦ 6 cylinder engine
- ♦ Very clean
- ♦ Will receive new paint job before sale

Offers in the region of £4000.
Please call Sam on 07810 891567
(East Anglia area)

SOUTH EAST TRAVELLER PROJECT

Are you interested in working with Traveller communities and libraries, museums and archives? Would you like to take part in a small sub-regional groups to discuss possible projects? The groups will cover a wide range of communities including settled Travellers, Showmen, New Travellers and Gypsies. Please contact Sonia Rasbery, South East Museum, Library and Archive Council's Cultural Diversity Network Co-ordinator on 01243 430053

DRAGON



Friends, Families & Travellers was established during 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 two months and are open to all members.

An apology...

...To members who have been anxiously expecting their Winter edition of the newsletter. Due to a change of staff and a very hectic time over the Christmas period, we decided to put out a bumper edition covering October through to February. Normal service will be resumed with then next issue!

FFT

Community Base

113 Queens Road

Brighton BN1 3XG

Tel: 01273 234 777

Fax: 01273 324 778

fft@communitybase.org



Contacts Page



LOCAL FFT CONTACTS

Brighton:

Judy Pointing - 01273 698531

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 & TRAVELLER ORGANISATIONS

The Travellers' School Charity

C/O Janet Fawcett, 3 Bryn Terrace, Rosebush, Clunderdym, Pembs, SA66 7QU
01437 532 432

Educational Advice for Travellers

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

The Gypsy Council GCEWCR

Charlie Smith / Anne Bagehot - 01708 868986

The Association of Gypsy Women

Sylvia Dunn - 01268 782792

New Futures Association (NFA)

Carol Waller, Glaneirw, Tany-groes, Ceredigion, SA43 2HP, 01239 810548

Email: nfauk@hotmail.com. Minicom and Textphone.

BIAS Irish Travellers Project

The Old Library Building, Willesden Green Library Centre, 95 High Road,

Willesden, London NW10 2ST - 0208 459 7638

Irish Travellers Movement in Britain

The Old Library Building, Willesden Green Library Centre, 95 High Road, Willesden, London, NW10 2ST - 020 8459 7638

Irish Community Care, - Tim Bradley, Young Irish Traveller Men's Worker—0161 205 9105

York Traveller Project

01904 630526

London Gypsy Traveller Unit

020 8533 2002

Scottish Gypsy Traveller Association

- 0131 650 6314

Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group - 01629 734 805

Irish Travellers Movement

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

Advisory Council for the Education of Romany & Other Travellers (ACERT)

- 01279 418 666

Labour Campaign for Travellers Rights

0113 248 6746

Europe Roma

0208 802 7496 - 07812 694 347

Pavee Point

North Great Charles St, Dublin 1

00 353 1 878 0255

OTHER

The Children's Society

Rachel Grant & Debbie Harvey - 92b High Street, Mid-Somer Norton, Somerset - 01761 411771

The Children's Society in Cornwall

- Caroline Dann &

Cheryl Ellwood, 11 Market Place, Penzance, - 01736 333660

Save the Children (Scotland)

Michelle Lloyd - 0131 527 8200

PressWise

- Mike Jempson

0117 941 5866

Groundswell

- 020 737 5500

National Association of Boat Owners

01749 677195

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)

020 7828 7022

Justice?/Schnews

- 01273 685913

Planning Aid

- 01963 230045

Education Otherwise

- 0870 730 0074

Land Registry Office

-01705 768 820

The National Small Woods Association

, 3 Perkins Beach

Dingle, Stiperstones, Shropshire, SY5 0PF, - 01743 792644

LEGAL ADVICE & REPRESENTATION

Traveller Advice Team (TAT)

(Community Law Partnership)

24hr. mobile: 07768 316755

and 0121 685 8595

Public Law Project

- 020 7467 9800

Squatters Advisory Service

020 7359 8814

Legal Aid Head Office

020 7813 1000

FFT PUBLICATIONS LIST

Available from the FFT office. Please make cheques payable to FFT!

Agenda 21 : Breakdown of the major policy regarding Travellers 75 p

Student Information Pack:

Info. on law, legal status, health, etc £3.00



If you have any CONTACT NUMBERS you think should be included in this list, please let us know!

**If you believe that all members of society 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: _____ I enclose my subscription:

Waged-£8.00 Unwaged-£3.00 Family Waged-£12.00 Family Unwaged-£5.00 Organisation-£20.00 / 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.