During Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, we celebrate the unique and diverse histories, cultures and languages of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK and also the remarkable and immense contributions Gypsy, Roma and Traveller individuals and communities bring to wider society.

Travellers’ Times have produced a short video ‘Roads from the Past’1 which provides a brief overview of the histories of some of the largest Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK.

This year, our theme for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month is ‘Make Some Space’. We are asking people across the UK to ‘Make Some Space’ for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in their day to day lives. This will look different for different people, for example:

- If you work at a council, this might mean ensuring there are enough spaces for Gypsies and Travellers to stop in your area, or mapping traditional stopping places throughout history in your area.

- If you are a teacher, this might mean making space in your teaching time to focus on the histories, cultures or present realities of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

- If you work on TV or in the media, this might mean making some space in TV and film for authentic portrayals of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

- If you work for a Government organisation, this might mean making some space to consider how your service or area of work could be more inclusive to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

- This might mean making some space in your day to educate yourself on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories and cultures and how to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to uphold their rights.

In addition to this, during the last week of GRTHM (from the 23rd - 30th June), there will be a special focus on the theme ‘Proud to Be’. During this week, we’re asking people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to share reasons why they are proud to be from the community they are from.

We would love for you to take part in our celebrations this June and we hope that in this resource pack you will find the inspiration and information you need to fully participate.

Warmest wishes,

Sarah Mann
Director at Friends, Families & Travellers

Ben Stroud
Friends, Families & Travellers Trustee and Chair to Friends, Families & Travellers Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month Work 2021

1. www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bhBbMrF8Z0
#MakeSomeSpace
#ProudToBe
# Key dates for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people throughout history

The rich and diverse histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are largely absent from classrooms, books and museums. The timeline across these pages gives a small glimpse into the international histories of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. There are many different people and groups who fit under the umbrella term ‘Gypsies, Roma and Travellers’ used in society. This can include Roma people, Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsy Travellers, New Travellers, Liveaboard Boaters and Travelling Showpeople.

In the timeline below, we include key dates in history for people of Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Roma and Scottish Gypsy Traveller ethnicities. We include the events below as a starting point for your further reading and learning.

## Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>998 AD</td>
<td>People with Roma heritage travelled from northwest India as prisoners, slaves and soldiers. They were forcibly enlisted to the army of Mahmud of Ghazni and after his death, were expelled from Indian territories and driven to nomadism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1100s</td>
<td>Ancient laws in Scotland recognise a community of people called ‘tinklers’ from their occupation as tinsmiths. They are viewed differently to mainstream society, seen to have their own customs and dialect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1200s</td>
<td>Romany Gypsies first recorded in England were incorrectly thought to have travelled from Egypt. In 1530, Henry VIII’s ‘Egyptians Act’ expelled Romany Gypsies in England. In 1554, Queen Mary ruled that being a Gypsy was punishable by death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500s</td>
<td>Roma people in the territories of modern day Romania were taken as slaves and forced to work in monasteries, mines and in fields. Slaves were the property of their owners, bought and sold in their hundreds. It was not until 1856 that the Moldovan and Wallachian Assemblies abolished slavery within their principalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600s</td>
<td>Irish people began to split from the general population around 12 generations ago in the 1600s. ‘An lucht siúil’ (the walking people) became known for storytelling and sharing songs from city to city.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Last known hanging for the crime of being a Gypsy in Suffolk, England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Roma and Sinti people, sometimes called the ‘forgotten victims’ of the Holocaust were subject to deportation to concentration camps, mass murder and horrific medical experimentation. Over 200,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered or died as a result of starvation or disease.</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
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6. [https://www.historytoday.com/reviews/gypsies-england](https://www.historytoday.com/reviews/gypsies-england)
7. [https://www.historytoday.com/reviews/gypsies-england](https://www.historytoday.com/reviews/gypsies-england)
Roma communities begin seeking asylum in England through the 1990s.

Following expansions of the European Union, there is an increase in migration of Roma people to the UK from across Europe.

Irish Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic group in Ireland, and recognised as Ireland's only indigenous community.

Scottish Gypsy Travellers recognised as an indigenous ethnic minority group in Britain.

Irish Travellers recognised in British law as an ethnic group, following a legal challenge in court brought by eight individuals refused service at five pubs in London.

Germany officially recognises the genocide of Roma and Sinti people in the Second World War.

The Report of the Commission on Itinerancy is the first systematic attempt by the Irish government to settle Travellers in Ireland, aiming to force families off the road, into bricks and mortar accommodation.

General adoption of a mechanised caravan, rather than a horse-drawn wagon.

Romany Gypsies were recognised in Britain as a distinct ethnic minority group under the 1976 English Race Relations Act.

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[11. https://minorityrights.org/minorities/romagypsiestravellers/#:~:text=Romany%20Gypsies%20were%20recognized%20as,accorded%20this%20status%20in%202000.]


Want to learn some useful words and phrases in **Irish Cant?**

For Irish Travellers, the language you speak can have varying names according to the family you belong to.

Mincéir Thari can be called Shelta, Cant or De Gammon. It is an ancient indigenous language formed using the Ogham technique that gradually developed towards its present form under the pressure of contact with Irish and Hiberno-English. Mincéir means Traveller and Thari means talk, so this might be translated as ‘Traveller talk’.

The closest living language is old Irish, which was spoken in Ireland pre 1200s. While the language is practiced mainly through oral tradition, with very little written history of it, the words for ‘priest’ and ‘God’ shown in old, pre-Christian documents in Ireland show shared lineation between the languages. The language is widely used today and the majority of people who speak it also speak English. There are different dialects of Irish Cant and in Ireland alone, there can be differences in words commonly spoken across the country and differences in spelling between people.

Thank you to Dr Sindy Joyce, Oein DeBharduin and Chris McDonagh for support with these translations.

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Want to learn some useful words and phrases in **Scottish Cant?**

Scottish Cant is spoken between Scottish Gypsy Traveller or Nacken people.

While there is a standardised strain of Cant, localised dialects mean there are multiple evolutions of the dialect. The language is almost entirely oral and differs between geographical locations or through family and social preferences. The language is constantly evolving. For Scottish Gypsy Travellers, Scottish Cant is often the first language for children, but will be accompanied by other languages used by parents.

Scottish Cant shares greater commonality with Rromanés than with Gaelic languages, revealing the lineage of Scottish Gypsy Travellers from Northern India, with Roma peoples. It is part of the phenomenon of Indic diaspora languages spoken by travelling communities of Indian origin outside India. There are different dialects of Scottish Cant and in Scotland alone, there can be differences in words commonly spoken across the country and differences in spelling between people.

Thank you to our friends who speak Scottish Cant for providing support with these translations.
Want to learn some useful words and phrases in Romani Dialect?

Roma, Romany Gypsies, Manuches, Kale and Sinti and people with Roma descent live in various countries across the world.

There are more than 10 million people of Romani descent in Europe alone. Romani is a rich family of languages with an Indo-Aryan root. Romani is the only Indo-Aryan language that has been spoken exclusively in Europe since the Middle Ages and whose vocabulary and grammar are related to Sanskrit.

The language used by Romani people is a source of great pride, facilitating the connectivity and communication between people across the world. Nearly all Romani speakers are multilingual (speak another language) and also use the language of the majority population where they live. It is estimated that there are 4.6 million Romani speakers in Europe. There are many different dialects of Romani spoken and in England alone, there can be differences in words commonly spoken in the North and in the South of the country and differences in spelling between people.

Thank you to Matley Mitchell, Miria Bica, Aluna Lepadatu and Martina Stipakova for support with these translations.
5 ways you can mark Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month

1. Hold a celebration day
Work with local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and organisations to hold a celebration day.
Invite people from local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to share stories or to enjoy food or arts traditional to their culture. Invite Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to learn more about your service.
Celebrate the achievements and contributions of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people within your workforce.

2. Make a plan of action to tackle health inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in your area
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are known to face some of the most severe health inequalities and poor life outcomes amongst the United Kingdom population, even when compared with other groups experiencing exclusion, and with other ethnic minorities.
On average, Gypsy and Traveller people have life expectancies 10-25 years shorter than the general population and live around 6 less years in good health before life expectancy is taken into account.
There are simple and practical steps health and care services can take to reduce the health inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Read our Guide on tackling health inequalities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities¹ and agree on a plan of action for reducing health inequalities in your area.

3. Provide training to members of your staff team on how they can provide inclusive services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people
A range of organisations across the UK offer training on cultural awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and how to provide inclusive services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
Find voluntary sector organisations working in your area² or find out more about Friends, Families and Travellers training³.

4. Set up a staff network for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in your sector or organisation
At least one in 200 people in the UK are from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and it is likely that some of your staff or service users are from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
During Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, consider setting up a staff group, following the example of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association⁴ and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Workers Association⁵.

5. Celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month on social media
Share any activities that you do and your positive commitment towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in your local community by using the hashtag #MakeSomeSpace on social media through the month of June.
Encourage Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in your staff team and local community to share messages on social media using the #ProudToBe hashtag in the last week of June.

¹. Read our Guide on tackling health inequalities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
². Find voluntary sector organisations working in your area
³. Find out more about Friends, Families and Travellers training
⁴. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association
⁵. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Workers Association
Sharing information about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month on social media

This year, we would love to see health and care services across the UK harnessing the positive power of social media to raise the profile of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and to celebrate the contributions people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities have made to your local area.

Use these hashtags to help us shout about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month

#MakeSomeSpace

For the month of June, you can share activities you’re doing as part of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month on social media using this hashtag and use this hashtag to find out what others are doing and how you can be involved.

#ProudToBe

#ProudToBe week (23rd - 30th June)

In the last week of June, we’re asking people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to share reasons why they are proud to be from the community they are from.

Let Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in your staff team and in local communities know that #ProudToBe week is taking place and help them to celebrate in a way that feels comfortable to them.

What can I do right now?

Copy and paste the messages below to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!

Post 1:

I’m celebrating Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month this June. Are you?

There is so much to learn about the rich histories and cultures of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in the UK.

This year the #GRTHM theme is #MakeSomeSpace

Get involved here:

www.gypsy-traveller.org/grthm

Post 2:

Through celebration and education, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month challenges prejudice and shares the rich and diverse histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

We are going to #MakeSomeSpace in our diary to celebrate #GRTHM

Get involved:

www.gypsy-traveller.org/grthm

Share your GRTHM cards

Take a picture of you or your team holding our photo card and let people know why you are celebrating Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. There’s a space on the card so you can share why Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month is important to you. You can download our photo card at www.gypsy-traveller.org/grthm or request a copy at https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LKZ3SYQ

Don’t forget to tag us!
We work to end racism and discrimination against all Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

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