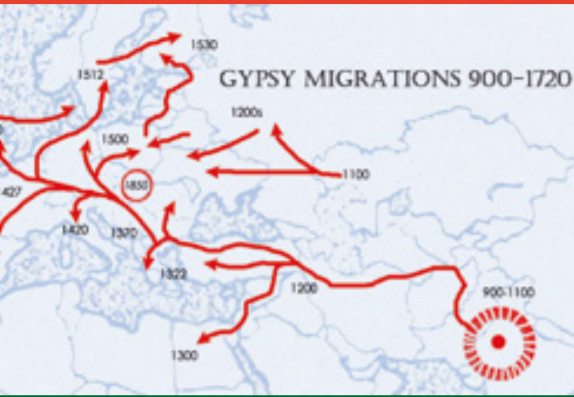


# GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PEOPLE THROUGH HISTORY

If you have tried to learn more about the diversity and histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, you wouldn't be alone in finding that there's just not much out there.



People with Roma heritage travelled from northwest India as prisoners, slaves and soldiers.

Theories suggest 60,000 Roma people were forcibly enlisted to the army of Mahmud of Ghazni and after his death, were expelled from Indian territories and driven to nomadism.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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 Moldavian and Wallachian Assemblies abolished slavery within their principalities.<sup>3</sup>



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.

998AD

1100S

1200S

1500S

Roma and Sinti people, sometimes called the 'forgotten victims' of the Holocaust were deported to concentration camps, subject to mass murder and horrific medical experimentation by Nazi soldiers.

Over 200,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered as a result of starvation or disease.



Last Romany people historically travelled with elaborately made 'bender tents'.

From 1850 onwards, Gypsy Wagons are used to travel, with bender tents used alongside.



Last known hanging for the crime of being a Gypsy in Suffolk, England.<sup>6</sup>

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.

1940S

1850

1600S

1600S

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.<sup>9</sup>



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.

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



Scottish Gypsy Travellers recognised as an indigenous minority ethnic group in Britain.<sup>12</sup>

1963

2000

2004 - 2007

2008

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act becomes law. The new law means nomadic Gypsy and Traveller people are at risk of having vehicles (homes) confiscated, fines and imprisonment.

The High Court rules that Local Authorities are no longer able to issue blanket bans on Gypsies and Travellers stopping on parcels of land, recognising that 'the Gypsy and Traveller community have an enshrined freedom not to stay in one place but to move from one place to another'.<sup>14</sup>



Eileen Flynn becomes the first Irish Traveller to become a senator in Ireland.

Irish Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic group in Ireland, and recognised as Ireland's only indigenous community.<sup>13</sup>

2020

2020

2020

2017

The planning definition of 'Traveller', which states anyone not travelling for more than 12 months, even if due to old age or ill-health, is not considered a 'Traveller', is declared 'discriminatory' by the Court of Appeal, in a case supported by Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT).



2022

2021 Census has for the first time ever included 'Roma' as an ethnic category, with the official population declared at over 100,000 people.

Population increases are also seen for Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller people.

2022

Supreme Court rules 'Anti-Traveller' wide injunctions have a negative impact on Gypsies' and Travellers' ability to pursue a nomadic way of life, but rejected an appeal lodged by FFT, London Gypsies and Travellers (LGT) and Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group (DGLG), against the granting of wide injunctions against 'Persons Unknown'.

2023

New powers brought in by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 challenged at the High Court by Wendy Smith, a Romany Gypsy, with FFT and Liberty acting as Interveners.

2024



The Equality and Human Rights Commission finds Pontins Holiday Park acted 'unlawfully' against Irish Travellers, following an investigation into the holiday park's blacklist of Irish-sounding names.

2024

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