

GRTHM²⁵



EDUCATION PACK

FOR PRISONS

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
History Month

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Education Pack for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2025!

Every June since 2008, people from across the UK have celebrated Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM). During this month, we celebrate Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Roma and nomadic communities, histories and cultures.

GRTHM is an opportunity to celebrate, educate and raise awareness of the barriers and issues affecting traditionally nomadic communities. By taking part, you can help make society more welcoming for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

While GRTHM is officially marked in June, promoting inclusivity and acceptance can and should be done all year round. To aid this, we've made our [GRTHM packs available](#) all year round! Head over to our GRTHM resource page to find past resources.

As always, happy Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2025! We look forward to seeing how you choose to celebrate.

Designed for prison and other organisations invested in education and learning, this pack will guide you through what you can do to raise awareness and celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month.

Whether you are surprised to learn that many Irish Traveller people speak a language known as Shelta, or come from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community yourself, this guide and our brochure can work as the perfect launching pad for everyone.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month has a long way to go before it is celebrated far and wide, but you are helping take a step closer to creating a more inclusive society. Thank you!

From all of us at Friends, Families and Travellers...

We hope you have a brilliant Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2025!



BEFORE WE GET STARTED...

It's important when teaching or learning about Romany Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller, Showmen, Liveaboard Boater and New Traveller people, to emphasise the distinct histories, cultures and heritages of these communities. Just like all communities, there are things that are shared and things that are not—no one group is the same as another!

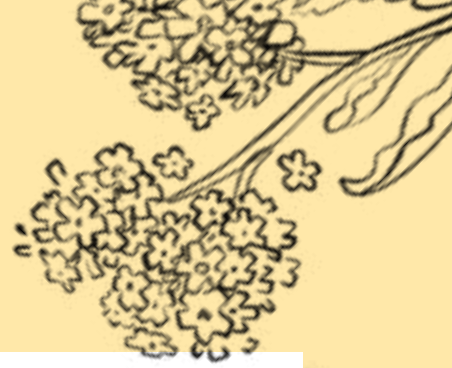
If you'd like to learn more, head over to gypsy-traveller.org or get in touch!

[Click here for the full timeline](#)





FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS



5 WAYS YOU CAN CELEBRATE GRTHM

HELP CREATE A **FAIRER AND JUST FUTURE FOR GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER** COMMUNITIES BY TAKING THE STEPS BELOW OR COMING UP WITH SOME OF YOUR OWN!



WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO GET INVOLVED:

- **39% of Gypsies and Travellers reported being unfairly stopped, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police, and for 82% this was due to their ancestry, race or physical appearance¹.**
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are two to three times more likely to be excluded than the national rate².**
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils often report that they've come to expect bullying because no action was being taken to prevent or respond to it³.**
- **Despite most Gypsies and Travellers facing racist abuse, harassment, and violence, it goes largely unreported to statutory agencies⁴.**
- **Research with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Police Association found extensive experiences of racism shown towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller police officers⁵.**

¹ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:64908d52-f70e-41f0-bc07-c43de5c35c95>

² <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Curriculum-Call-for-Evidence-branded-2.pdf>

³ https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/School%20Report%20and%20Findings%20for%20action%20against%20bullying%20of%20Gypsies%2C%20Roma%20and%20Travelling%20children%20in%20schools_V4_0.pdf

⁴ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:64908d52-f70e-41f0-bc07-c43de5c35c95>

⁵ [http://Drummond, A. \(2022\) 'Peripheral Inclusion? Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association Officers Speak Out', Romani Studies 32\(1\): 105-127.](http://Drummond, A. (2022) 'Peripheral Inclusion? Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association Officers Speak Out', Romani Studies 32(1): 105-127.)

⁶ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:64908d52-f70e-41f0-bc07-c43de5c35c95>

⁷ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-community/gypsies-and-travellers/the-gypsy-and-traveller-liaison-service>

⁸ <https://grtpa.co.uk/>

⁹ <https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2020/jul/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-social-work-association>

1

SPEAK TO GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER MEMBERS OF YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND MAKE A GRTHM PLAN TOGETHER

Although over 1 in 100 people in the UK are from Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities, many may not share their ethnicity in fear of discrimination, with 44% of Gypsies and Travellers reporting fear of being physically attacked⁶.

You may not be aware that peers, colleagues or friends are Romany Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller or from nomadic communities. Consider ways you can co-create an inclusive environment—welcoming spaces benefit everyone!

2

SET UP FOR A FORUM FOR GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PEOPLE

Great things happen when we come together!

Dorset Council's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Forum⁷, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association⁸ and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Workers Association⁹ are just a few examples of forums that have successfully bridged the gap between local organisations and institutions, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Forums allow a variety of perspectives and needs to be considered, so why not have a go at setting up your own?



3

INCLUDE GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORIES AND CULTURES IN GROUP SESSIONS, MEETINGS OR TRAINING

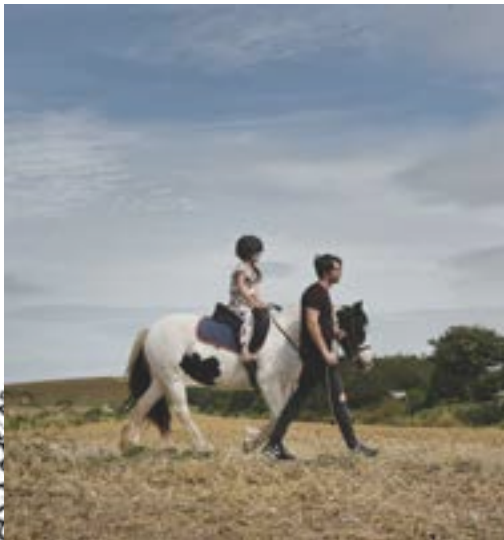
You most likely have a peer or a colleague who is from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community.

Use Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month as a starting point for developing your own learning and understanding, and that of those around you, by collectively exploring the rich histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

You might find that you can incorporate information about different travelling communities into the work you already deliver! For inspiration, see our suggested [teaching resources](#)¹⁰, [books](#), and [bitesize explainers](#)¹¹.

4

REVIEW YOUR ANTI-BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Almost half of British adults openly express negative attitudes against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities¹². That's more than for any other minority ethnic group.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are exposed to this hate from a young age, so set aside some time to review your anti-racist and anti-bullying policies and procedures in your organisation.

You can find guidance and free training to help you get started [here](#).

¹⁰ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/teaching-resources/>

¹¹ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/heritage-2/>

¹² <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-vision-for-change/challenging-hate/>

¹³ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-flagship-projects/theatre-for-change/about-crystals-varado/travelling-tales/>

¹⁴ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-flagship-projects/theatre-for-change/>

BOOK *TRAVELLING TALES* TO COME TO YOUR SCHOOL OR A LIBRARY NEAR YOU!

Take a dive into Crystal's interactive microcosm and get a front row seat to how life on the road used to be with ***Travelling Tales***¹³. An extension of Friends, Families and Travellers' critically acclaimed play ***Crystal's Vardo***¹⁴, you can hear traditional stories, listen to Romani music and explore artifacts in our life size Vardo.



GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PEOPLE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

ROMANY GYPSY, ROMA AND IRISH TRAVELLER PEOPLE ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND FACE PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION AT EVERY STAGE.

DESPITE ONLY **MAKING UP AN ESTIMATED 0.1-0.5% OF THE POPULATION** IN ENGLAND AND WALES¹⁵, GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PEOPLE MAKE UP AROUND:

- **6% of the prison population¹⁶.**
- **15% of children in secure training units¹⁷.**
- **8% of children in YOIs¹⁸.**

On release, travelling communities are also more likely to experience difficulties with employment and education.

Sadly, widespread racial discrimination means that many young people will come into contact with the Criminal Justice System long before entering adulthood, and often face harsher sentences — you can read more about the impact the criminal justice system has on young Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and their families in our report [here](#).

It doesn't have to be this way. Tackling the root cause can pave the way for a kinder, fairer future for everyone.

We are currently running a #Part4NoMore campaign to repeal [Part 4 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act¹⁹](#), which gives police powers to imprison, fine and seize the homes of Gypsy and Traveller families. You can be part of historical change by writing to your MP — just use our quick and easy tool [here](#).



¹⁵ https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/old_files/Documents/Counted%20Out.pdf

¹⁶ https://wp-main.travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Brief-of-prisoners-in-the-adult-estate_final.pdf

¹⁷ https://crae.org.uk/sites/default/files/fields/download/CRAE_UN-%20CIVIL-SOCIETY-REPORT_22-DIGITAL.pdf

¹⁸ https://crae.org.uk/sites/default/files/fields/download/CRAE_UN-%20CIVIL-SOCIETY-REPORT_22-DIGITAL.pdf

¹⁹ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/campaigns/part-4-no-more/>

WHAT A DIFFERENCE INSPIRATION CAN MAKE

Inspirational people are often those who treat others with kindness, compassion and don't judge based on gender, race, ethnicity, or background. Below is a story from a Romany Gypsy man from the North of England, called Terry, on his inspirations.

"Back in the early 80s around 1981/2 I just got out of prison. I served 3 years due to my foolish behaviour. When I arrived home to my mother's house, I lodged there for 6 months then moved into my sister's for another 3 months.

I was unsettled going from one place to another, I was unemployed and only getting around £40 a week from the dole office. I did a bit of scrapping with brothers and cousins making a bit of money on the side to support myself. I needed clothes, I liked to look smart. One day we made a good wage from a tarmac job I felt rich because I had a couple of hundred pounds in my pocket.

*I SOON HAD A LOVELY
COMFORTABLE HOME
I WAS WORKING AND
KEEPING A BIT OF MONEY*

That week I went into the town and got new pants, a couple of shirts and new boots. I called into a second hand shop, there I picked up a nice gray strip suit. It was only £8. A couple of weeks later I went to a christening for my cousin's child. The local chapel was well known and used by the Traveller community.

Fr Ged always called onto the trailer site and into my mum's home to see my dad, he was in a wheelchair.

Fr Ged came to the christening part held on the site. When he spoke to me his words were, "Terry you look smart, you must have got a job". We spoke for a little while and I explained how I made a few quid. He said to me, "Why not get a proper job! You will have a wage every week, try and find a home, get yourself settled."

I did that I found a good job in a cotton factory and I got myself a little two bedroom flat with the council. Being a Gypsy I could easily come across the things I wanted. I asked people on the site and at work, I soon had a lovely comfortable home I was working and keeping a bit of money in the bank. I see Fr Ged at my mum's home and I told him what I have achieved. He was pleased and said "well done, I knew you could do it!"

He went on to say "now why not find something you love doing and make something of it". I do love to cook and learnt a lot from my family and cousins. Fr Ged said "why not go into college and learn more!"

I could not tell him out of pride and shame I'm not that good at reading and writing so said I will try.

That weekend I went into town. I was standing in for a pool match. When I got there, the lads said everyone turned up so I could do. I had a couple of drinks then headed towards home. Cutting through the back towards the





taxi, I seen a sign. It simply said, 'Come in, learn to dance'. I went in just to have a look, I sat in a chair just inside the door. The music was really nice and it was lovely to see the people dancing and enjoying themselves. The old lady asked me if I would like a cup of tea, it was only a tenpence. I sat there for about 30 minutes then this really old lad came to me and said "do you like dance?" I said I've never danced.

FROM THERE, EVERY WEEK,
SOMETIMES TWICE A WEEK,
I WENT AND LEARNED TO
DANCE, BALLROOM, LATIN AND
SEQUENCE. AFTER 6 MONTHS
I GOT A CERTIFICATE AND
A MEDAL.

The next question was "would you like to learn?" I said I can't read or write properly and mentioned I might not be able to pay to learn. He smiled and said don't worry about reading and writing, and the cost would be £3 a lesson. From there, every week, sometimes twice a week, I went and learned to dance, ballroom, Latin, and sequence. After 6 months I got a certificate and a medal. I felt proud and went over to my mum's. When she read the certificate she smiled and said "Well done my son". Fr Ged said the same

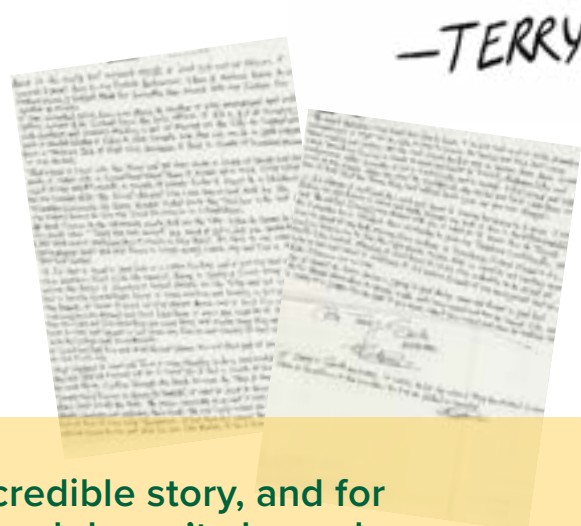
thing and added, "Don't give up, you can change".

I did change.

I continued to work and learn to dance for near to 6 years. I was taking up 3 or 4 lessons a week and really enjoyed myself. I was a Gold Bar medalist and the old lad (Cyril) was pleased with me. I went on to learn how to teach for 6 months as a student, then 12 months to gain my teacher's certificate.

I was so proud of myself, moving from nothing to something. Fr Ged played a big part in helping me to see the right people to gain help in reading and writing and mostly to be careful. Meaning I don't have to hide my identity to be proud of who I am and what I achieved. I did inform friends of my background, but did hide it from a lot as well.

So I learnt to know being a Gypsy is good. Being open and honest is good. But not to share information. To openly wait until you're asked and then be honest. Life as






We're so grateful to Terry for sharing his incredible story, and for showing that inspiring people is infectious and doesn't always have to be through huge gestures—they can come in small acts that we can all do every day. Just asking someone how they are doing can even brighten their day!

This GRTHM, how could you be more supportive, kind and compassionate? Is there a way you could inspire someone else to make a change too? We've included some ideas below but would love for you to think of your own!

MARKING GRTHM

There are a wide range of thought-provoking and entertaining resources to help you mark and celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. Here's a selection of some of our favourites:

GUIDANCE IDEAS

-  Share your Gypsy, Roma or Traveller hero online, using **#GRTHM25** and **#GRTHeroesMonth**.
-  Sign up to be a campaigner on our website²⁰, and check our Services Directory²¹ to see if you have any local organisations that you can get involved in.
-  Explore what it means to be inspirational, what it takes, and why it matters in groups. You could even share a story about a Romany, Roma or Traveller person who has inspired you!

Essential books and lesson resources

From books featuring Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller protagonists, to historical dives into ancestry, there are lots of wonderful books that you can find [here](#)²².

Meanwhile, we've created a short reading list with some of our favourites, along with a few resources you can browse through!

Listen to the audio recording of **'Roma, Recycle, Reimagine: Corcodusa Saves the Park'**, a book on climate justice, created by Roma children, with the support of Maria Raluca and Rosa Cisnero²³.




Written by Geoff Weedon and Richard Ward, **'Fairground Art: The art forms of Travelling Fairs, Carousels and Carnival Midways'** catalogues the work of fairground artists and investigates the histories of the craftsmen and their creations²⁴.

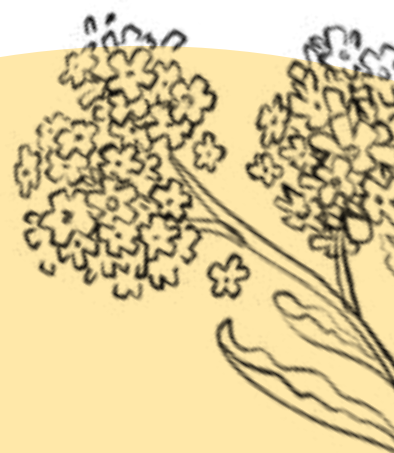
Take a look at **'The Mystery in Being a Gypsy'** by Gentylia Lee, an educational read for police, local authority workers, teaching practitioners, and healthcare professionals. If you are passionate about change against racism and discrimination then this book is a must read²⁵.

Read ***‘Why the Moon Travels’*** by Oein DeBhairduin, a haunting collection of twenty tales rooted in the oral tradition of the Irish Traveller community²⁶.

Based on real life accounts, ***‘Spokes: Stories from the Romani World’*** is filled with short stories featuring British Gypsies, Irish Travellers, East European Roma; and people whose Romani background has remained under wraps²⁷.

Lesson resources

-  Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children don’t often see themselves or their heritages reflected in the history classroom. [History Association has made it easy to ensure this changes with specifically curated teaching resources](#)²⁸.
-  Do you know who the first Romany Gypsy footballer to play for England was? Or which Irish Traveller singer had her TV debut thanks to the young David Attenborough? [Find out more in our resource pack on famous Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people](#)²⁹!
-  Take a look at and share [this comic](#), co-created with London School of Economics³⁰, on young people’s experiences of school and college, and what can be done to improve them with your class!



²⁰ <https://action.gypsy-traveller.org/page/90518/subscribe/1>

²¹ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/services-directory/>

²² <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/?s=teaching+resources>

²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GnuahXL96Q>

²⁴ <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/9780896595293/Fairground-Art-Travelling-Fairs-Forms-0896595293/plp>

²⁵ <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/9781803818795/Mystery-Being-Gypsy-Lee-Gentylia-1803818794/plp>

²⁶ <https://gutterbookshop.com/product/why-the-moon-travels-by-oein-debhairduin/>

²⁷ <https://fiveleaves.co.uk/product/spokes-stories-from-the-romany-world/>

²⁸ <https://www.history.org.uk/secondary/categories/606/module/8794/do-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-children-see-themself>

²⁹ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/resource/famous-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-people-introduction-for-teachers/>

³⁰ <https://www.lse.ac.uk/>

COMPETITION

WELCOME TO OUR GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH COMPETITION!

Our theme for this year is Gypsy, Roma and Traveller 'Heroes' Month: "Who inspires you?", where we explore what it means to be inspiring, why inspiration matters, and spotlight inspiring Romany, Roma, Irish Traveller, New Traveller, Showmen and Liveaboard Boater people.

This year, we are asking people in prison across the UK to think about who or what inspires them and to create whatever they want to reflect their thoughts.

They are welcome to use any medium of their choosing. Whether it's poetry, a drawing, collage or something else, we're excited to see what you come up with.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE INSPIRING? WHY ARE INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES IMPORTANT? WHO DO YOU THINK DESERVES THE LIMELIGHT? REMEMBER, CREATIVE INTERPRETATION IS ENCOURAGED, SO ANYTHING THAT SPRINGS TO MIND WHEN THINKING OF 'INSPIRATION' IS WELCOME AND ISN'T LIMITED TO OUR PROMPTS!

PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBMISSION TO COMMS@GYPSY-TRAVELLER.ORG BY 1ST JULY.

PRIZES:

Individual:

1st: £50 book token
2nd: £30 book token
3rd: £20 book token

Group:

1st: £100 book token
2nd: £60 book token
3rd: £30 book token

Here are some questions you may want to think about:

Who or what inspires you?

How does it feel to be inspired or to inspire someone else?

Why does inspiration matter?

Do you know an inspiring Gypsy, Roma or Traveller person?

Or is your inspiration connected to these communities in some way?



Here are some questions you may want to think about:

Who or what inspires you?

How does it feel to be inspired or to inspire someone else?

Why does inspiration matter?

Do you know an inspiring Gypsy, Roma or Traveller person?

Or is your inspiration connected to these communities in some way?

Who inspires you?

Please send your submission to
comms@gypsy-traveller.org by **1st July**



**FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS**

GRTHM²⁵

Who inspires you?

Please send your submission to
comms@gypsy-traveller.org by **1st July**



**FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS**

CELEBRATING GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

This June, get talking about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month on social media. We've made it as easy as possible by including template images and text (below) you can use!

Let us know what you get up to by using these hashtags:

#GRTHeroesMonth
#GRTHM25

We'll be sharing lots about GRTHM across June on our social channels. Follow us to keep updated!

EXAMPLE POST:



Click on
image to
download:

If you're from a Romany Gypsy, Traveller, or Roma background, we want you to know that you're always welcome here.

This #GRTHM25, we're taking the time to learn about the colourful histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities—come along!

<https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/grthm/>



@GypsyTravellers



/FriendsFamiliesandTravellers



@FriendsFamiliesandTravellers

Feel free to come up with your own –
don't forget to use the hashtags and tag us!

FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS

#GRTHeroesMonth

Friends, Families and Travellers works to end racism and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

Contact Details:

Address

Friends, Families and Travellers
Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton
BN1 3XG

Telephone 01273 234 777

Email fft@gypsy-traveller.org

Like us on Facebook

/FriendsFamiliesandTravellers

Follow us on Instagram

@FriendsFamiliesandTravellers

Follow us on Twitter

@GypsyTravellers

View us on Youtube

/FriendsFamiliesandTravellers

gypsy-traveller.org