

GRTHM<sup>25</sup>



# BROCHURE

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller  
History Month

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# CONTENTS

3 INTRODUCTION;



4 'WHO INSPIRES YOU?';

5 A WORD FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE;

6 HISTORIES TIMELINE;

8 SUBMISSIONS;

14 CELEBRATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.



# INTRODUCTION

## Welcome to 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.





# GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER 'HEROES' MONTH: "WHO INSPIRES YOU?"

This year, we wanted to hand the celebratory reigns over to you a little more, so we asked, who inspires you?

Unsurprisingly, the submissions came flooding in about inspirational Romany Gypsies, Roma, Irish Travellers, Liveaboard Boaters, Showmen, and New Travellers! There are lots of changemakers, generous, and kind individuals that don't get enough recognition of the positive impact they have on their families, communities and wider society—this year, we want to change this.

At Friends, Families and Travellers, we believe the best way to tell people's stories is to let them tell it themselves.

We've highlighted a selection of standout submissions received earlier this year and included them in this year's GRTHM materials, as you will find further down.

As the stories are told by the people themselves, we hope you will find an opportunity to reflect on what inspires you—maybe it's a person, an object or a place.

This year's theme grew out of a series of conversations involving people from Romany, Roma and Traveller communities across the UK, as part of the co-production that takes place at Friends, Families and Travellers. We're extremely grateful to everyone who shared their time, thoughts, ideas and perspectives with us.

We would love to see anything you create, so make sure to tag us! You can find our socials at the back of this pack, and please use **#GRTHM25** and **#GRTHeroesMonth** when sharing.



# A WORD FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dear friends and colleagues,

I'm pleased you've chosen to join Friends, Families and Travellers on yet another exciting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM)!

As always, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month is an opportunity to explore what makes the UK's Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Roma, New Traveller, Liveaboard Boater and Showmen communities so special.

Previous themes have explored the places lived, the journeys made, and the families formed. This year, we opted to focus on the people that give meaning to all of the above, whether they're family, colleagues, or neighbours.

Our Brochure, Education and Digital Engagement Packs can be used all year round, so no matter the month, you can include and celebrate Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Roma and nomadic cultures, histories and traditions—just head to [gypsy-traveller.org/GRTHM](https://gypsy-traveller.org/GRTHM).

We look forward to seeing what you get up to (especially for our competition!), and we'd love to hear how you plan to spend GRTHM—just let us know or tag us.

Happy Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2025!

Sarah Mann  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# THE PAST...

There are lots of resources that explore the diverse cultures and histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities...It can just take a bit of time to digest all of the information that is out there!

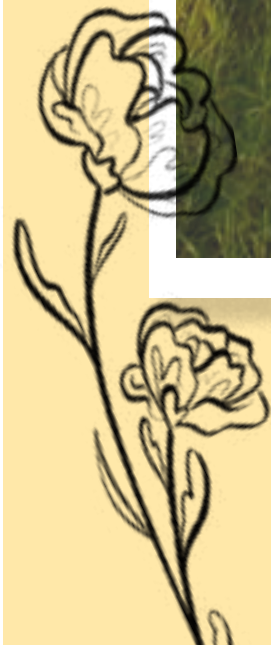
To make things a little bit easier, we've created this timeline with some must-know information:

[Click here for the full timeline](#)





FRIENDS,  
FAMILIES &  
TRAVELLERS





# GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HEROES: WHO INSPIRES YOU?

Everyone can be inspired by anyone, or anything! Inspiration can take many forms – whether it's a place or a person, and often helps people branch out into the unknown, stay motivated, or keep going in the face of adversity.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people have long shaped British society and made a profound difference to people's lives, but you might struggle to find much about it. This GRTHM, we're working to change that.

We asked you about the inspiring Romany, Roma, Irish Traveller, Liveaboard Boater, Showmen and New Traveller people in your life. Here is a selection of special stories you shared, from across the communities:

## JEMIMA POPE on SMELLINGTON PIFF

I first came across him about eight years ago – I think it was when he was releasing his first album. I'm a fan of hip-hop anyway but he was talking about eviction and the everyday things involved in New Age Traveller life. "Riot Children" reminded me of my childhood – we were taken on a lot of protests - and I like that. Plus, his videos have real-life sites and show people what it's like on sites.

I've seen him live a few times, mostly at festivals. I saw him play in Europe and lots of Traveller teenagers got up on stage and started dancing with him, which was really cool. They need someone to look up to as a musician. There's a few Traveller hip-hop artists - both New Age Travellers and traditional Travellers - that I know of but not many make festival billings and so forth.

I would say he's influenced me because I do sometimes perform poetry and spoken word with a rap and hip-hop influence. Having people from the same background as me is inspiring.





## JENIFER KOVACOVA on DANIEL BALAZ

I started with Connecting Roma in June 2022 – I'd contacted them six months prior inquiring about the job as interpreter. Daniel was very welcoming and friendly, explaining what he needed me to do. After a few months I'd moved on from that role and now I'm Team Leader. He's taught me a lot of things that I wouldn't get taught in school or a different workplace. He's made the workplace more of a family setting than being at work. Before I was working under strict managers. Here, if I made mistakes I didn't feel like I was being judged.

He went out of his way to give me his knowledge: everything he knew he shared with me. He taught me how to drive and let me use his car for the driving test. He considers my dad to be like his brother: we're more like a family now than when we first started. It's almost like he needs to help: he's always there. As well as being very intelligent, he's also very humble. When he shares the victories of the organisation, he never puts himself forward as the winner when maybe he should.



## KATIE DAVIES on SYLVIA DAVIES, her Nan

She has over 70 grandkids, great grandkids, great great grandkids...

It's just the morals that she put into us as kids when we were growing up, particularly us as females. I can see in myself and my sister the way we are, the way we speak, the way we look after the house comes from what she instilled into us.

When I think of her nowadays, I think of all the times I went away with her and grandad. We went to the same beach, Barmouth in Wales, each time. She would do anything to have a good time with her kids and her grandkids, she just wanted to take us out and have a good time. At the funeral, most of the eulogies were about her taking us to the beach and spoiling us. She was happiest when her kids and grandkids were happy – that was enough for my nan.



## NICKY SNELL on THOMAS MCCARTHY

I first met him in 2010 at Sidmouth folk festival. I went to several of the Traveller gigs partly because I had lived in an area called Skerton where many Travellers live. I was blown away by Thomas' singing. I asked him if he fancied singing at a folk night near Lancaster: I was working at a local Steiner school, which is how I got involved with the education side. We put on a show for the children at the library. He did more storytelling with the children than singing: he talked about being a Traveller and Traveller culture and then we did schools work with him in state schools.

There were other people on the folk scene supporting him and it all came to a head in 2019 when he was nominated for the TG4 Singer of the Year award in Ireland. Through Bill Lloyd he's also been to Appleby and Glastonbury. We managed to get him across to the US one time by the skin of his teeth. He has worked in Europe.

I think he's inspired me mainly through his singing. I liked the way the Travellers presented themselves: very much to the point - no airs and graces. I was just blown away in the first thirty seconds of his performing. It was like being transported to another time and place. Then I witnessed him inspiring other people. For a few years there were a lot of conferences and his became the most popular workshop because of the way he presents himself. I was inspired directly by his singing and by the authentic way he has of working with other people and explaining Traveller ways.



## NOELETTE HANLEY on ALANNA and DELSEY WITNEY

Luton Irish Forum held Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Cultural Awareness Campaign at Luton Point Shopping Centre, including banners featuring images of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members who have made positive contributions, a display to dispel myths, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller souvenirs, and culturally friendly crafts. Alanna and Delsey – and their mum – stumbled upon it and have been involved since then. They were 15 and 13 at the time (now 16 and 14).

They've participated in various activities, such as speaking at a Luton Council Lunch and Learn Cultural Awareness session about the challenges Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children face in school; helping run a craft stall at a Roma Christmas Party and at the St. Patrick's Festival; a shadowing day with Lord Bennett; and contributing to a research project via the Traveller Movement, focusing on the experiences of Romani and Irish Traveller communities with policing.

This week, they were filming for Healthwatch Luton, discussing a GP access report and speaking to the community about taking care of their health. They're also talking to their friends and encouraging them to get involved. Educating the public about the needs and difficulties of the communities has been important, and they're excellent role models, not just for Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers, but for young people as well.





## PHILLIPPA HEATH on DR JO CLEMENT

Jo is a poet, maker and Lecturer at Northumbria University who has been working with us at The Museum of English Rural Life (The MERL) in Reading as an Interpretation Consultant. In particular, Jo has been working to re-display our museum collections to better represent Romany and Traveller histories. They have created a new exhibit, 'The Long Road', which has involved them reinterpreting collections, working with local school students to identify objects which have meaning to them, and developing their own personal creative responses, to create a display and accompanying learning resource which showcase the importance of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller lived experiences in rural life.

Jo's work has particularly focused on The Robert Dawson Romany Collection which was donated to The MERL by the Romany and Traveller Family History Society in the late-90s. It's an extensive collection comprising photos, pamphlets, books, periodicals, films and objects that Bob had collected, and there are notebooks documenting different languages from the communities. Bob worked on the collection for over 50 years, becoming a champion and great advocate of the communities' histories and traditions.

It's an incredible resource and it needed someone with lived experience to bring it together and draw out stories. Jo's work has provided new insights into the collections and developed powerful creative responses showcasing why these heritage collections remain significant and important to our lives today. Jo is an incredible person; it's been a joy to work with them. I have learned so much from them and been hugely inspired by their creativity, their energy and their passion to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stories and histories are brought to the fore to show the role that the communities have played and continue to play in rural life. The legacy of Jo's work on The MERL will be felt for a long time, inspiring our visitors now and long into the future.



## TOMMY BUCK on TERRY GREEN

I first met Terry on a site visit about five years ago. My first impression was he was a confident community leader with a heart of gold. This was at the Maresfield site, I was visiting to see if anyone wanted support just after lockdown. His confidence is what struck me – he puts his views across well. He’s a great communicator and the stories he tells are fantastic. He gets involved in whatever he can, he’s very supportive of FFT’s projects.

Terry is very much the family man. His grandkids were involved with Jake Bowers in making a bench statue of him. He’s been in campaigns to get people voting. He’s supported a recent project, sharing stories of his family and his upbringing: an oral history that will be archived. He’s supportive of all of our projects and he’s respected across the community.



# HOW CAN I TAKE PART?

Below, you will find draft social media content you can use – you're welcome (and highly encouraged!) to create your own!

**#GRTHeroesMonth**  
**#GRTHM25**

## EXAMPLE POST:



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

Click on  
image to  
download:

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

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**Telephone** 01273 234 777

**Email** [fft@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto:fft@gypsy-traveller.org)

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**[gypsy-traveller.org](http://gypsy-traveller.org)**