

**GRTHM:**  
**Onwards**  
*with*  
**Hope**



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**FRIENDS,  
FAMILIES &  
TRAVELLERS**

**Education Pack**

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# Introduction

## Welcome to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2026!

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, New Traveller, Showman and Liveaboard Boater communities, histories and cultures.

This year, we wanted to look forward, drawing inspiration from the hope that young people hold for the future. We worked with Gypsy and Traveller young people in Sussex to help create this year's packs, and you can see their beautiful collages throughout our booklets. We are so proud of them, and we hope you are too.

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

As always, happy Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2026!  
We look forward to seeing how you choose to celebrate.

Designed for schools 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 2026!***

# 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](http://gypsy-traveller.org) or get in touch!

[Click here for the full timeline](#)

## GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH

### GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PEOPLE, CULTURES, AND TRADITIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

<p><b>998AD</b></p> <p>People with Roma heritage travelled from northwest India to places as distant as Africa.</p> <p>Medieval English laws prohibited non-Christians from holding land. In the case of Edward I, non-Christians were expelled from the landholdings of the crown.</p>	<p><b>1100s</b></p> <p>Arabic towns in Eastern Europe had a community of people called "Itzari" who had come from the Roma.</p> <p>The government attempted to control the mobility of these Roma, but they were not successful.</p>	<p><b>1200s</b></p> <p>Roma people in the territories of modern day Germany were taken as slaves and then the work to be made, and sold in public.</p> <p>Roma were the property of their owners, and were used for various purposes, including as entertainers and soldiers.</p>	<p><b>1500s</b></p> <p>Nomadic Gypsies that arrived in England were eventually thought to have travelled from Spain.</p> <p>In 1562, Henry VIII's "Gypsies Act" required that Gypsies be registered by 1562, otherwise they would be liable for a fine or imprisonment.</p>	<p><b>1600s</b></p> <p>Most people thought that Gypsies came from Egypt, and that they were a "wandering people".</p> <p>The "Gypsy" name of the 16th century was derived from the word "Egypt" (the word "Gypsy" became a term for a wandering or nomadic people).</p>	
<p><b>2017</b></p> <p>Irish Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic group in Ireland, and recognised as a distinct group in the Republic of Ireland.</p>	<p><b>2008</b></p> <p>Scottish Gypsy Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic group in Scotland.</p>	<p><b>2004 - 2007</b></p> <p>Following implementation of the EU Roma Directive, Roma were recognised as a distinct ethnic group in the EU.</p>	<p><b>2000</b></p> <p>Irish Travellers recognised in British law as an ethnic group, following a long campaign led by the Traveller community.</p>	<p><b>1963</b></p> <p>The Report of the Commission on the Gypsies and Travellers, published by the UK government, recognised the existence of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK.</p>	<p><b>1940s</b></p> <p>Roma and Gypsy people, sometimes called the "Gypsy" name of the 16th century, were deported to concentration camps, and later to extermination camps, during the Holocaust.</p>
<p><b>2020</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2022</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2022</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2022</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>
<p><b>March 2025</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>December 2024</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>May 2024</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2024</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2024</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>	<p><b>2023</b></p> <p>The High Court ruled that Irish Travellers are as long as they have lived in Ireland, and that they are a distinct ethnic group.</p>



## Recent history

Take a look below at some of the more **recent landmark changes, achievements** and **events** for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities **across the UK**.

**2023**

Supreme Court rules 'Anti-Traveller' wide injunctions have a negative impact on Gypsies' and Travellers' ability to pursue a nomadic way of life.



**2024**

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.



**May 2024**

High Court declares parts of Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSCA) in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

**December 2024**

Planning definition of 'Traveller' reverts to more-inclusive pre-2015 definition, which better reflects accommodation needs of many Gypsies and Travellers.

**March 2025**

The UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights calls for repeal of PCSCA's eviction powers against roadside camps.

**May 2025**

NHS England takes a major step by recommending that health bodies across the UK include Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people in patient data, aligning records with the 2021 census.



**March 2026**

Government's amendment to Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (PCSCA) to revert 12-month area ban change back to the original (pre-PCSCA) 3 months accepted.



## 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:**

**Romany Gypsies, Roma and Irish Travellers experience the lowest educational attainment at all Key Stages out of any ethnic groups in the UK<sup>1</sup>.**

**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are more likely to experience restraint and isolation in schools<sup>2</sup>.**

**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are two to three times more likely to be excluded than the national rate<sup>3</sup>.**

**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 it<sup>4</sup>.**

**62% of Gypsies and Travellers have experienced racial abuse, the highest out of all minority ethnic groups surveyed<sup>5</sup>.**



<sup>1</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Curriculum-Call-for-Evidence-branded-2.pdf](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Curriculum-Call-for-Evidence-branded-2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-warns-un-that-childrens-rights-have-worsened-in-england/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-warns-un-that-childrens-rights-have-worsened-in-england/)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-warns-un-that-childrens-rights-have-worsened-in-england/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-warns-un-that-childrens-rights-have-worsened-in-england/)

<sup>4</sup> [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](http://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)

<sup>5</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/national-survey-exposes-racism-and-discrimination-faced-by-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-people/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/national-survey-exposes-racism-and-discrimination-faced-by-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-people/)

## 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 attacked<sup>6</sup>.

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!

## Set up a forum for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people

Great things happen when we come together!

Dorset Council's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Forum<sup>7</sup>, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association<sup>8</sup> and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Workers Association<sup>9</sup> 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?

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

<sup>7</sup> [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-community/gypsies-and-travellers/the-gypsy-and-traveller-liaison-service](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-community/gypsies-and-travellers/the-gypsy-and-traveller-liaison-service)

<sup>8</sup> [grtpa.co.uk/](http://grtpa.co.uk/)

<sup>9</sup> [www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2020/jul/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-social-work-association](http://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2020/jul/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-social-work-association)

<sup>10</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/teaching-resources/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/teaching-resources/)

<sup>11</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/heritage-2/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/heritage-2/)

## Include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories and cultures in your lessons, assemblies or training

There is most likely a child in your classroom, 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](#)<sup>10</sup>, [books](#), and [bitesize explainers](#)<sup>11</sup>.

## Review your anti-bullying and discrimination policies and procedures

Almost half of British adults openly express negative attitudes against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities<sup>12</sup>. 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](#).

<sup>12</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-vision-for-change/challenging-hate/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-vision-for-change/challenging-hate/)

<sup>13</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-flagship-projects/theatre-for-change/about-crystals-varado/travelling-tales/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-flagship-projects/theatre-for-change/about-crystals-varado/travelling-tales/)

<sup>14</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-flagship-projects/theatre-for-change/](http://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<sup>13</sup>.

An extension of Friends, Families and Travellers' critically acclaimed play Crystal's Vardo<sup>14</sup>, you can hear traditional stories, listen to Romani music and explore artifacts in our life size Vardo.



## Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in the classroom

All ages can take part in GRTHM celebrations and we've put together a few activities you could do to mark GRTHM depending on which age group you are working with.

**5-7 years old (KS1):** Encourage your class to think about what 'hope' means and collectively come up with examples of when hope can be inspiring or useful.

**7-11 years old (KS2):** Bring in a book or talk about a film that inspires hope in you and why.

**11-14 years old (KS3):** Discuss some of the challenges Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people may face and what you'd say to someone who is going through the same issues.

**14-16 years old (KS4):** Make a short video about who or what inspires hope in your local community – you can always tag us on [TikTok!](#)

## Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and discrimination

Schools can also **invest in understanding and teaching about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures**, and work with parents to build a **trusting and non-judgmental relationship**, and community engagement figures should be in place to help **build trust**.

Take a look at the [Teaching Resources page](#) on our website for more.

# The power of *hope*



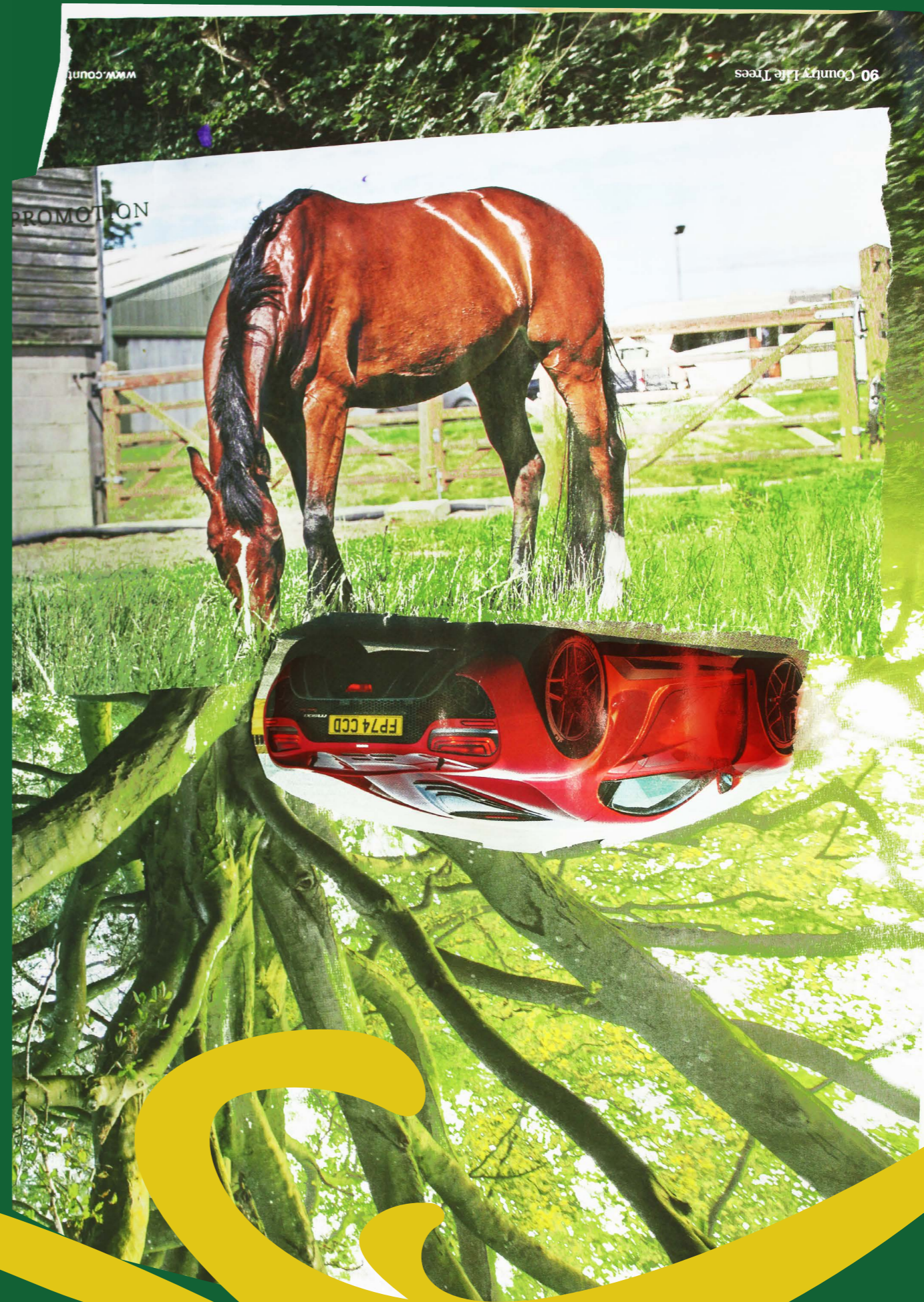
Hope can be transformative and a vehicle for change. Throughout history, hope has spurred people on in the face of adversity. Now, we'd like to use GRTHM to explore how hope can change the future too, and what we need to do to get there.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can face inequalities and barriers across all areas of life, making hope difficult to hold onto – but that's what makes it so important. Whether it's a small step or a big shift, every type of hope holds potential!

At FFT, hope is at the epicentre of our work. From campaigning for safer, more secure Gypsy and Traveller sites, to believing in the ability to change hateful and discriminatory narratives.

Giving hope to others is equally as important, and easier to do than you might think. This June, how you might make a friend, or even a stranger, feel hopeful? How does hope shape what you do in school or at home? What makes you feel hopeful about the future?

Below, you'll find some ideas about how you might cultivate hope, but we'd love for you to think of your own too!



# Guidance on 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:

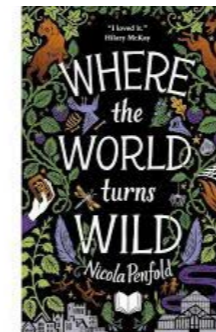
- Share what gives you hope online, using [#GRTHM26](#) and [#OnwardsWithHope](#).
- Sign up to be a campaigner on our website<sup>15</sup>, and check our Services Directory<sup>16</sup> to see if you have any local organisations that you can get involved in.
- Explore how hope feels, why it matters, and what kind of future you'd like to build in the classroom. You could even invite pupils to share a story about a Romany, Roma or Traveller person who has driven change or spread hope to others!



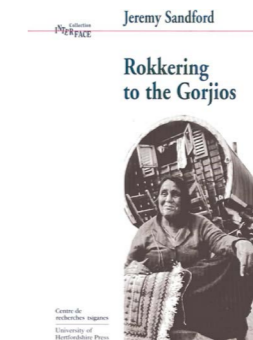
# Essential books and lesson resources

From children's books featuring Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller protagonists, to romantic fantasy, and colouring books, there are lots of wonderful books for a variety of ages that you can find [here](#)<sup>17</sup>.

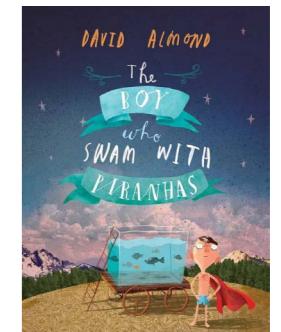
Meanwhile, we've created a short reading list with some of our favourites, along with a few teaching resources you can use in your lessons!



Written by Nicola Penfold, [‘Where the World Turns Wild’](#) is an ecological adventure in the form of children's fiction. The Traveller characters find hope in amongst despair, and set about trying to change things.



This book is a celebration of Gypsy lifestyles and cultures. Speaking about hope, struggle and desire, [‘Rokkering to the Gorjios’](#) by Jeremy Sandford is a revised edition of work that can be read [here](#).



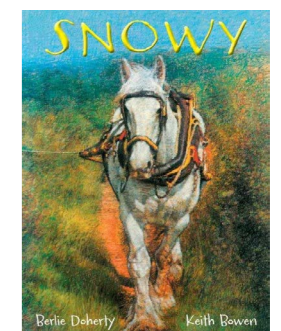
Take a look at [‘The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas’](#) by David Almond, a children's storybook about a boy who runs away from home and joins a carnival.



[‘Romano Bumburumbum’](#) by Marek Czureja is a project co-ordinated by The Children's Society as a way for young Roma people to share their rich culture. You can find out more about how they made this beautiful story [here](#).



Filled with four fictional, magical stories for children, [‘Canal Stories for Children with Colouring Pages’](#) by Jules Mack is the perfect colouring book that gently helps children to understand that being honest is always best.



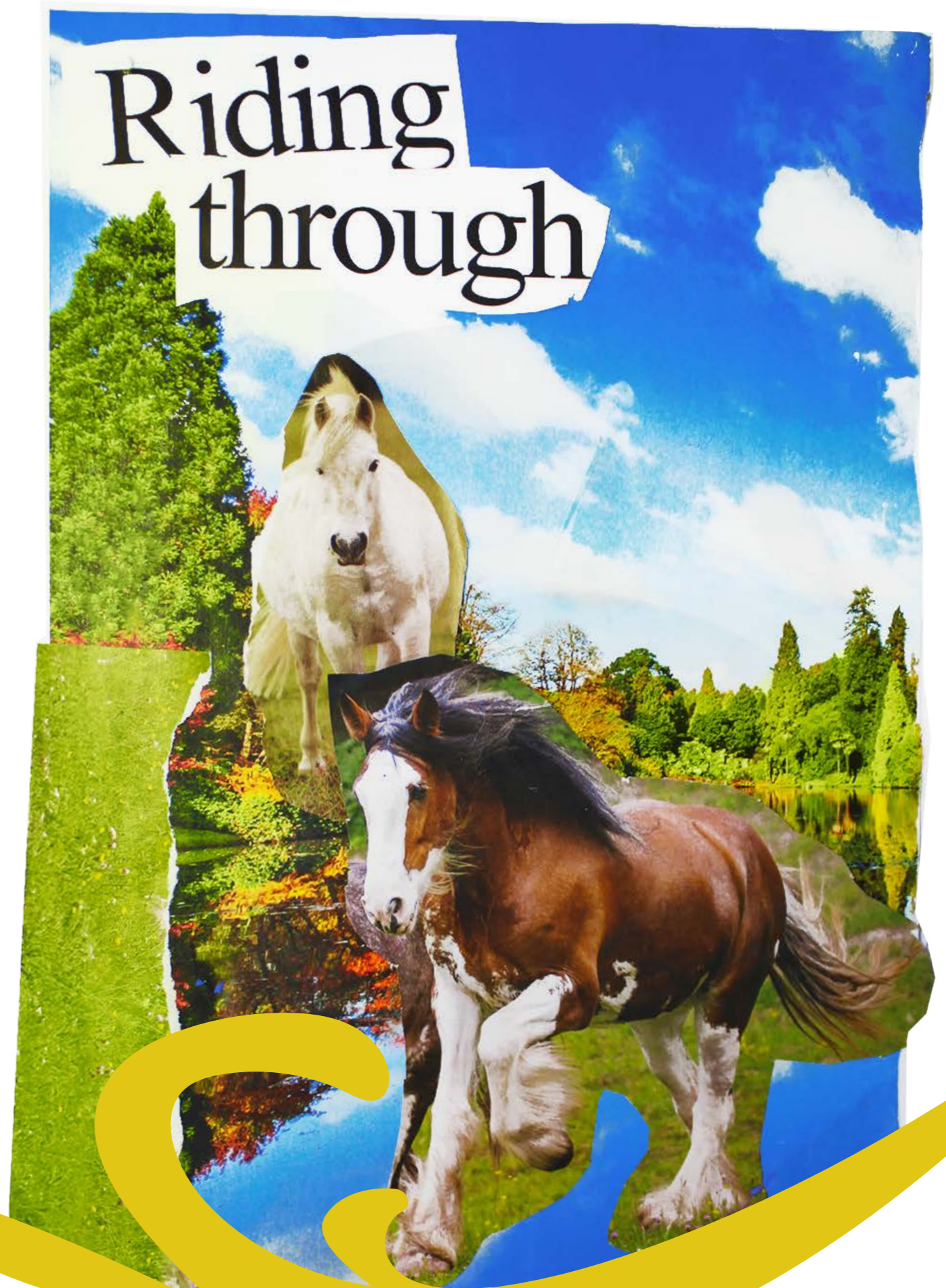
Award-winning picture book [‘Snowy’](#) by Berlie Doherty, about a family living in a narrowboat on the Chester canal, with Snowy the boat horse.

<sup>15</sup> [action.gypsy-traveller.org/page/90518/subscribe/1](http://action.gypsy-traveller.org/page/90518/subscribe/1)  
<sup>16</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/services-directory/](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/services-directory/)  
<sup>17</sup> [www.gypsy-traveller.org/?s=teaching+resources](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/?s=teaching+resources)

# Lesson resources

- From audio recordings to activity sheets, the Romany Theatre Company has put together [resources for students in Key Stage 2 and 3](#). See if you can find the activity on hope – perhaps it can inform your competition entry!
- Learn more about the persecution of Roma and Sinti communities during the Holocaust through [this interactive flipbook](#), co-created with the University of Sussex.
- The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) website hosts a vast amount of resources for educators, including resources on community activists, changemakers and role models. [Take a look!](#)

For more inspiration, books to read and information to absorb in the classroom, head over to the [Teaching Resources page](#) on our website.



# Competition

## Welcome to our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month competition!

Our theme for this year is **'Onwards With Hope'**, where we explore present and future Romany Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller, New Traveller, Showmen and Liveaboard Boater aspirations and dreams, and what kind of future we want to build together.

We're asking schools and children create a collage surrounding this year's theme of **'Onwards With Hope'**, looking at what hope means, how we can continue to foster hope, and what we want the future to look like.

A photo of your collage should be sent to [comms@gypsy-traveller.org](mailto:comms@gypsy-traveller.org) by 12th June.

What kind of future do we want to build together? What do you want the future to be like for you? What gives you hope? What does hope feel like? Remember, creative interpretation is encouraged, so anything that springs to mind when thinking of 'hope' is welcome and isn't limited to our prompts!

We're asking schools and individual students to think about what hope means to them and how it can transform the future through art.

If your school enters a group submission, you can win book vouchers to the value of £100 for first prize and £50 for second prize.

If an individual shares their own submission, they could win a £50 voucher for first prize and £25 for second prize.

Here are some questions you may want to think about:

- **How does hope make you feel?**
- **What or who gives you hope?**
- **Why does hope matter?**
- **What kind of future do we want to build together?**

## PRIZES:

### Individual

**1st: £50 book token**

**2nd: £30 book token**

**3rd: £20 book token**

### Group

**1st: £100 book token**

**2nd: £50 book token**

**3rd: £30 book token**



# ***GRTHM: Onwards With Hope***

What kind of future do we want to build together?  
What do you want the future to be like for you?

What gives you hope?  
What does hope feel like?



**#GRTHM26 #OnwardsWithHope**

What does hope mean to you?

**Competition Deadline: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026**



**Individual submissions:** 1st prize: £50, 2nd prize: £25  
**Group submissions:** 1st prize: £100, 2nd prize: £75, 3rd prize: £50  
*all prizes in the form of book vouchers*

## 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:

**#GRTHM26 #OnwardsWithHope**

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

### EXAMPLE POST:

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



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

This #GRTHM26, 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/>

Find image at: <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/GRTHM26.webp>



@GypsyTravellers



/FriendsFamiliesandTravellers



@FriendsFamiliesandTravellers



**FRIENDS,  
FAMILIES &  
TRAVELLERS**

# **FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS**

**#GRTHM26 #OnwardsWithHope**

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

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### **View us on Youtube**

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

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