

Weaving Journeys



**FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS**

Digital Engagement Pack *Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month*

JUNE 2023

A CELEBRATION OF GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER LIVES, HISTORIES AND CULTURES



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Welcome to our Digital Engagement Pack for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2023!

This pack is designed to help you mark and celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM) from wherever you are, online.

This pack will offer a glimpse into the rich and diverse histories, traditions and cultures of Irish Traveller, Romany Gypsy, Roma, New Traveller, Boater and Showmen communities, as well as guidance on how you can raise the profile of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, and the tools you need to get started.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month is an important celebration, and by shouting about its significance online and taking the time to read this pack and our brochure, you are already moving towards a fairer and more inclusive society for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. Thank you - we can't wait to see what you do this June!

From all of us at Friends, Families and Travellers...we hope you have a brilliant Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2023!



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.



998AD

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.¹

1200s

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.³

1100s

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.²



1500s

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.⁴

- <https://kopachi.com/articles/a-new-look-at-our-romani-origins-and-diaspora-by-ronald-lee/>
- <https://www.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-06/gt-timeline-A4-web.pdf>
- <https://romediafoundation.wordpress.com/2014/04/18/roma-slavery-in-the-romanian-territories-a-catch-22-of-history-and-recognition/#>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z2b36fr/revision/2>



1600s

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.⁵

1650

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



1850

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

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



1940s

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 or died as a result of starvation or disease.⁷

1940s-1960s

General adoption of a mechanised caravan, rather than a horsedrawn wagon.⁸



1963

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.⁹

5. <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep42187>

6. <https://www.historytoday.com/reviews/gypsies-england>

7. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/learn-about-the-holocaust-and-genocides/nazi-persecution/the-porrajmos/>

8. <https://www.salford.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/info-for-parents-students-and-teachers/ethnic-minorities-and-travellers/traveller-wagon-project/history-of-wagons-and-wagon-building/>

9. <http://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/AssimilationPolicies.pdf>

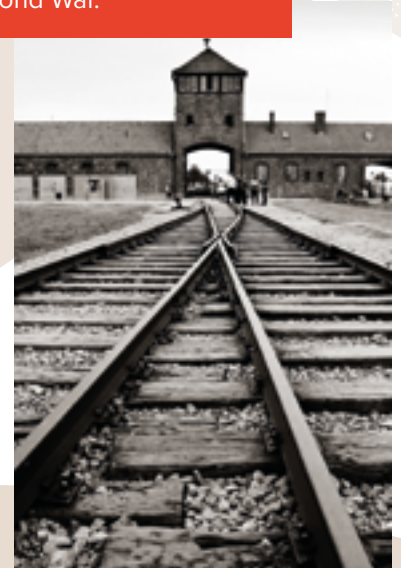
1976

Romany Gypsies were recognised in Britain as a distinct ethnic minority group under the 1976 English Race Relations Act.¹⁰



1982

Germany officially recognise the genocide of Roma and Sinti people in the Second World War.¹¹



1990s

Roma communities begin seeking asylum in England through the 1990s.

2000

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.

2004/2007

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

2008

Scottish Gypsy Travellers recognised as an indigenous ethnic minority group in Britain.¹²

2017

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

10. <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/romagypsiesitravellers/#>

11. <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/sinti-and-roma-federal-republic-germany/>

12. https://bemis.org.uk/docs/gypsy_travellers_in_contemporary_scotland.pdf

13. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/oireachtas/travellers-formally-recognised-as-an-ethnic-minority-1.2994309>



Ireland 2020

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



England 2020

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'.¹⁴



June 2022

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.



October 2022

The planning definition of 'Traveller', which says that anyone not travelling for longer 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.



December 2022

The Office for National Statistics announces that the 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.

14. <https://ukhumanrightsblog.com/2020/01/27/court-of-appeal-upholds-the-right-to-roam-of-romany-and-travellers/>

Photograph of Eileen Flynn: "Creative Commons Seanad Éireann - First Sitting of the 26th Seanad - 29 June 2020" by Houses of the Oireachtas is licensed under CC by 2.0

6 ways you can join in with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month online

1 Engage with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations on social media

There are countless organisations up and down the country tackling the root causes of inequalities and working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people directly to help secure a bright future, free of discrimination. Keep up to date and offer support by engaging with them on social media!

If you don't know where to start, take a look at our [Services Directory](#) which lists a wide range of organisations, from [TravellerSpace](#) to [AyeRight](#).

2 Celebrate on social media

Show your support to Romany Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller, and nomadic people this June by sharing the significance of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month with your followers.

By taking part, you will help raise awareness and forge solidarity with people and organisations you might not have come across otherwise.

You can come up with your own social media posts or use the text and image templates we've provided on page 10 – don't forget to tag us and use the #WeavingJourneys and #GRTHM23 hashtags!

3 Encourage learning about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller changemakers

Watch our YouTube series '[Standing on the Shoulders of Giants](#)' to learn about inspiring Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people who stood up in the face of injustice and fought for change.

Change happens every day, and there are many organisations and individuals working to make the world a better place. Let the world know about the inspiring work your local organisations do!

Whether it's breaking down barriers in football by the [Gypsy Traveller League](#), or sharing the daily lives of New Travellers through [TAT Down](#), there is lots to learn.

4 Share the latest news about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to your followers

There is widespread prejudice and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, but by sharing news, information and new developments, you help normalise the daily realities of people from these communities. It's a slow process, but a necessary one.

If you're unsure of what the latest news is, [check out our website](#), [Travellers' Times](#) or [subscribe to our newsletter](#).

5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month doesn't have to end in June

There are lots of events, workshops, commemorations and remembrance days throughout the year, which you can be a part of.

Whether it's sharing details of [Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum's Romany Day event](#), commemorating Roma Holocaust Day on 2 August, or taking part in [our training](#), there is always plenty to shout about!

6 Help us break down barriers

At Friends, Families and Travellers, we campaign for change at a local and national level. Sometimes, it's about standing against [draconian legislation](#), and sometimes it's about effecting [long term change through education](#).

But we always need more people to stand for what's right, so do your part and encourage your online community to [become campaigners](#) for the rights of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

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

Download social templates here

Example posts



June is Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month!

We're celebrating #WeavingJourneys because we want a society where Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Roma and nomadic people are respected and appreciated.

Why not get involved? <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/grthm/>

#GRTHM23



We're celebrating #WeavingJourneys this #GRTHM23 by taking the time to learn about the rich contributions and histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities – why not join us?

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



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

This #GRTHM23, 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/>

#WeavingJourneys



@GypsyTravellers



/FriendsFamiliesandTravellers



@FriendsFamiliesandTravellers

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

#WeavingJourneys

#GRTHM23

www.gypsy-traveller.org/grthm

#WeavingJourneys

Friends, Families and Travellers: Working towards equality

We work to end racism and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

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