

GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORY MONTH 2024

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WHAT DOES FAMILY MEAN TO YOU? WHAT DOES FAMILY MEAN TO YOU? WHAT DOES FAMILY MEAN TO YOU?



FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS



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Welcome to our Education Pack for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2024!

This pack will help you explore Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM). It is designed to provide insight into the rich histories, traditions, and cultures of Irish Traveller, Romany Gypsy, Roma, New Traveller, Boater and Showmen communities, while helping raise awareness about some of the difficulties experienced throughout the years.

Our theme this year explores “*What does family mean to you?*”, looking at the different forms family can take – whether it’s parents, grandparents, siblings, neighbours or friends.

Designed for schools, prisons and any other sectors and 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.

When using our resources and talking to your class or people in prisons about family, it’s important to remember that not everyone shares the same experience, and sometimes discussions around family can be difficult. With that in mind, we encourage you to broaden the definition of family, and consider the joy in how varied support networks can be.

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 for some of Britain’s most marginalised communities. Thank you!

P.S. When using our resources and talking to your class or people in prisons about family, it’s important to remember that not everyone shares the same experience, and sometimes discussions around family can be difficult. With that in mind, we encourage you to broaden the definition of family, and consider the joy in how varied support networks can be.



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.

Follow our timeline through the decades to find out what we do know.

[Click here for the full timeline](#)

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.



¹ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/resource/briefing-economic-and-financial-exclusion-gypsies-and-travellers-experience-in-england/>

² <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-warns-un-that-childrens-rights-have-worsened-in-england/>

³ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-warns-un-that-childrens-rights-have-worsened-in-england/>

⁴ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-warns-un-that-childrens-rights-have-worsened-in-england/>

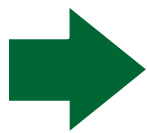
⁵ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:64908d52-f70e-41f0-bc07-c43de5c35c95>

⁶ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/national-survey-exposes-racism-and-discrimination-faced-by-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-people/>

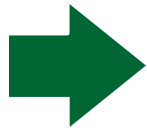
BEFORE WE GET STARTED...

It's important when teaching or learning about Romany Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller, Showman, Liveaboard Boater and New Traveller people, to emphasise the distinct histories, cultures and heritages of these communities.

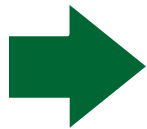
If you'd like to learn more, head over to gypsy-traveller.org or get in touch!



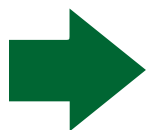
Gypsies, Roma and Travellers experience the lowest educational attainment at all Key Stages out of any ethnic groups in the UK.¹



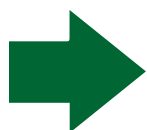
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are more likely to experience restraint and isolation in schools.²



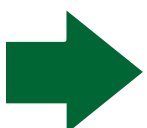
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are two to three times more likely to be excluded than the national rate.³



Young Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people disproportionately make up 15% of secure training units and Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs).⁴



Gypsies and Travellers are more vulnerable to non-racially motivated victimisation than other minority ethnic groups.⁵



62% of Gypsies and Travellers have experienced racial abuse, which was the highest out of all minority ethnic groups surveyed.⁶

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
TO GET INVOLVED

6 ways your organisation or sector can celebrate GRTHM

This Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, 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!

1

Speak to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller members of your local community and make a GRTHM plan together

Although over 1 in 1000 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 attacked⁷.

You may not be aware that peers, colleagues or friends are Romany Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller or from nomadic communities.

So, create a welcoming environment so that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people feel comfortable sharing their rich histories, traditions and perspectives on how to celebrate this June!

2

Set up for a forum for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in your sector or organisation

Dorset Council's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Forum⁸, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association⁹ and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Workers Association¹⁰ 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 to create a more inclusive society for all.

Why not have a go at setting up your own?

⁷ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:64908d52-f70e-41f0-bc07-c43de5c35c95>

⁸ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-community/gypsies-and-travellers/the-gypsy-and-traveller-liaison-service>

⁹ <https://grtpa.co.uk/>

¹⁰ <https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2020/jul/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-social-work-association>

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

There is most likely a child in your classroom, a colleague at work, or a person you're working with in prison 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 on different travelling communities into the work you already deliver! For inspiration, see our suggested [teaching resources](#)¹¹, [books](#), and [bitesize explainers](#)¹².

4

Review your anti-bullying and discrimination policies and procedures

Almost half of British adults openly express negative attitudes against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities¹³. 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.

5

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*¹⁴. An extension of Friends, Families and Travellers' critically acclaimed play *Crystal's Vardo*¹⁵, you can hear traditional stories, listen to Romany music and explore artifacts in our life size Vardo.

¹¹ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/teaching-resources/>

¹² <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/heritage-2/>

¹³ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-vision-for-change/challenging-hate/>

¹⁴ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-flagship-projects/theatre-for-change/about-crystals-vardo/travelling-tales/>

¹⁵ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/our-flagship-projects/theatre-for-change/>

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and Criminal Justice System

Gypsy, Roma and 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 Wales¹⁶, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people make up around:

6% of the prison population¹⁷

15% of children in secure training units¹⁸

8% of children in YOIs¹⁹

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are more likely to face harsher sentences, and experience difficulties with employment and accommodation on release.

The overuse of punishment as discipline towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children means that they are at higher risk of coming into contact with the Criminal Justice System as adults.

Sadly, widespread racial discrimination means that many young people will come into contact with the Criminal Justice System long before entering adulthood.

With the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022²⁰ now in place, there is an increased risk of entire families coming into confrontation with the law as a result of a serious lack of safe stopping places²¹.

Rather than over-policing families with nowhere else to go, **local authorities should establish temporary stopping places**, allowing families to rest without fear of retribution.

¹⁶ https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/old_files/Documents/Counted%20Out.pdf

¹⁷ https://wp-main.travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Brief-of-prisoners-in-the-adult-estate_final.pdf

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

¹⁹ https://crae.org.uk/sites/default/files/fields/download/CRAE_UN-%20CIVIL-SOCIETY-REPORT_22-DIGITAL.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/why-we-helped-take-the-police-act-to-court/>

²¹ <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/resource/briefing-accommodation-issues-facing-gypsies-and-travellers-in-england/>

Trust in police services within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities is worryingly low, and:

- 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 appearance²².
- Despite most Gypsies and Travellers facing racist abuse, harassment, and violence, it goes largely unreported to statutory agencies²³.
- Research with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Police Association found extensive experiences of racism shown towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller police officers²⁴.

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

Schools can invest in understanding and teaching about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures, and work with parents to build a trusting and non-judgmental relationship, and Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers should be in place in all force areas to help build trust.

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



²² <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:64908d52-f70e-41f0-bc07-c43de5c35c95>

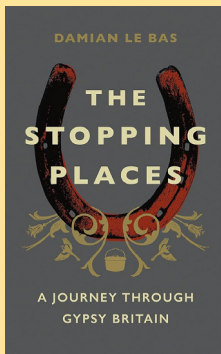
²³ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:eu:64908d52-f70e-41f0-bc07-c43de5c35c95>

²⁴ Drummond, A. (2022) 'Peripheral Inclusion? Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association Officers Speak Out', *Romani Studies* 32(1): 105-127.

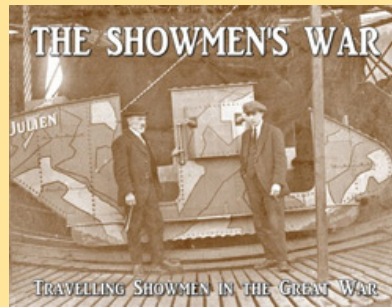
Essential books and lesson resources

From children's books featuring Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller protagonists, to historical dives into ancestry, there are lots of wonderful books for a variety of ages that you can find [here](#)²⁷.

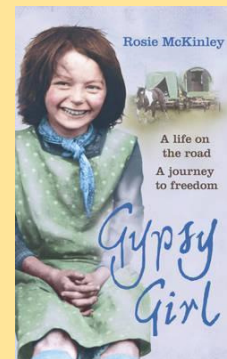
Meanwhile, we've created a short reading list with some of our favourites, along with a few teaching resources you can use in your lessons!



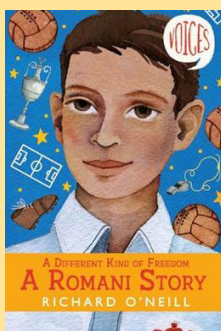
'The Stopping Places' by Damian Le Bas, a critically acclaimed book about heritage, journeys of discovery, and old stopping places.



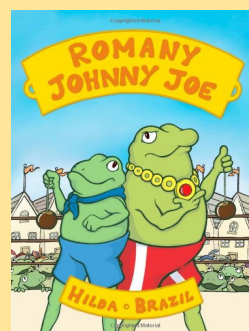
'The Showmen's War' by Michael Smith, Stephen Smith and Kevin Scrivens, which was produced to help commemorate the contribution played by the Travelling Showmen of Great Britain in the Great War.



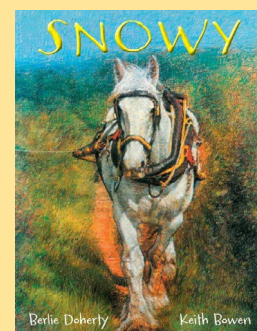
Written by Rosie McKinley, **Gypsy Girl** is the story of her childhood on the road, where she moved around England and Ireland, and roamed fields and meadows with her siblings.



'A Different Kind of Freedom: A Romani Story' by Romany author, Richard O'Neill. This story depicts the struggle between tradition and following your own passions.



'Romany Johnny' by Hilda Brazil uses the toads and frogs of Toadville to teach children not to judge others.



Award-winning picture book **'Snowy'** by Berlie Doherty, about a family living in a narrowboat on the Chester canal, with Snowy the boat horse.

Lesson resources

From children's books featuring Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller protagonists, to historical dives into ancestry, there are lots of wonderful books for a variety of ages that you can find here.

- Roma and Sinti communities have often been described as the 'forgotten victims' of the Holocaust. So, we've put together a [teaching resource](#) providing context, information, and historical narrative to help increase understanding.
- 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!](#)
- Take a look at and share [this comic](#), co-created with London School of Economics²⁸, on young people's experiences of school and college, and what can be done to improve them with your class!



²⁸ <https://www.lse.ac.uk/>

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month competition

Welcome to our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month competition! Our theme for this year is “What does family mean to you?”, where we explore the different shapes, sizes and meanings ‘family’ can take!

This year, we are asking children across the UK to think about what family means to them and to create whatever they want to reflect their thoughts.

They are welcome to use any medium of their choosing. Whether it’s a painting, pottery, a video or something else, we’re excited to see what you come up with.

Why is family important to you? Who does it include? Remember, not everyone’s family looks the same, and your friends can be your family too!

We’re asking schools and individual students to answer, “*What does family mean to you?*” through art.

If your school enters a group submission, you can win book vouchers to the value of **£100** for first prize, **£50** for second prize, and **£30** for third prize.

If an individual shares their own submission, they could win a **£50** voucher for first prize, **£30** for second prize, and **£20** for third.

We will announce the winners in July!

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

Here are some questions you may want to think about:

What does family look like to you?

How does the word "family" make you feel?

Who do you consider family?

Why is family important to you?

What does family mean to you?

TEACHERS! Please send your submission to comms@gypsy-traveller.org by **30th June**.



**FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS**

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**FRIENDS,
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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:

#GRTHMFamilies
#GRTHM24

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

Example posts:



Click on each image to download:

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 #GRTHM24, 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/>

We're celebrating #GRTHM24 this June by taking the time to explore what family means to us – why not take part?

<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**

FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS

**#GRTHM24
#GRTHMFamilies**

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

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gypsy-traveller.org

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