

Travellers' Times

Minister's Assurance on Voting Rights

Issue 8 told how Gypsy and Traveller organisations met with Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Minister Chris Mullin last Autumn. He promised to contact others in Government to ensure that Travelling people would not be prevented from voting in elections by lack of a permanent address. And sure enough, the new Representation of the People Act allows anyone to make a 'declaration of local connection' at a council office, claiming a link to the area so that they have voting rights there. This also enables squatters, remand prisoners and homeless people to vote. Read section 6 of the Act on 'Notional Residence' at www.hms0.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/

Improving The View Press Coverage

Travellers' Times issue 7 highlighted good practice guidelines issued by the CRE in England and Wales, which suggested how the press could improve their coverage of Gypsy and Traveller issues and develop more responsible and fair reporting practices. In December 1999 the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland issued Anti-Racist Reporting Guidelines, which incorporate many elements of the CRE guidelines and the Guidelines on Race Reporting published by the National Union of Journalists. The guidelines take up concerns expressed in the Equality Commission Racial Equality **Bulletin No. 2: Press Reporting on Minority Ethnic Issues and Racism in Northern Ireland** and include:

- Consider how you would approach the story if writing about a group of settled people.
- Seek to publish articles which challenge racial assumptions.
- Do not allow your letters column or features pages to be used to spread racial hatred.

For a copy of the Bulletin or Guidelines contact the Commission at Scottish Legal House,
65-67 Chichester Street,
Belfast BT1 4JT

freephone ☎ 0808 100 3000
☎ 028 9031 5993
✉ creni.user@btinternet.com
☎ equalityni.org.uk

inside:

Resources

From the Towpath

Isle of Wight

Travellers' Talk

Policy & Law

Europe & the World

Hall of Shame

Help



Resources

Funding Initiative for Travellers

As part of their UK Grants Programme 1999-2001, Comic Relief set up a Special Funding Initiative for Travellers. Comic Relief will be reviewing the Initiative to decide whether to continue with it next year. In the meantime, people are welcome to apply under the main programme. ☎ 020 7820 5555 ⌘ comicrelief.org.uk

Alternative Australia

Celebrating Cultural Diversity by Alan Dearling, with co-pilot Brendan Hanley (Mook Bahloo), describes Alan's travels through Oz and people he meets who are, or have been, involved with 'alternative Australia'. Much of the book consists of contributions by these people, including lots of drawings and photos. It becomes clear that a wide range of people, from academics to 'ferals' (Travellers) find that in Oz they can live with a measure of freedom. Mook says: "No matter where we come from, what we look like, what language we speak, what religion we follow or who we imagine we are, evidence suggests that we humans once lived in tribes, or large extended families. Some still do, despite the odds". Priced £13.99 +£2.50 p&p, from Enabler Publications, 3 Russell House, Lym Close, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3DE. ☎/📠 01297 445024 ✉ adearling@aol.com ⌘ members.aol.com/adearling/enabler/

Traveller Children: A Voice for Themselves

Traveller Children: A Voice for Themselves by Cathy Kiddle examines how minority groups are forced to adapt to the changing society around them. Her message is that if parents and teachers are prepared to understand and co-operate with each other, education will help destroy the marginalisation of Traveller cultures rather than the cultures themselves; the children will become the voice of those cultures. Priced £15.95, add 10% for p&p within UK or 20% outside. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 116 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JB ☎ 020 7833 2307 📠 020 7837 2917

More from Eli

More from Eli is by Eli Frankham, President of the National Romani Rights Association. His thoughts, poetry and stories do much to close the divide that is born of ignorance, intolerance, fear and mistrust of the travelling Romani. £2.50 including p&p from Eli at The Bungalow, Roman Bank, Walpole St Andrew, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 7HP.

A false dawn

A false dawn: My life as a Gypsy woman in Slovakia by Ilona Lacková was launched in May at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in London. Her life spans the century and has been an exercise in building bridges between cultures and peoples. Motherhood in wartime, existence in a newly socialist society, work as a playwright and touring theatre company member and as a party official are described in this fascinating book through the eyes of a woman sustained through change and struggle by Romipen: Romani tradition, culture and language. Part of the Interface collection, the book is available from the University of Hertfordshire Press, Learning and Information Services, College Lane, Hatfield AL10 9AD ☎ 01707 284654 📠 01707 284666 ✉ UHPress@herts.ac.uk (⌘ www.herts.ac.uk/UHPress/) priced £11.99 plus 75p p+p (cheques payable to 'Polyfield Property').

Witchhunt against asylum-seekers

An Institute of Race Relations special report notes that, in the small village of Kollum, north Netherlands, the rape and murder of a 16-year-old Dutch girl was followed by a witchhunt against asylum-seekers. As a new political party is born to oppose the creation of more reception centres and more towns and villages oppose the dispersal of asylum-seekers, the Institute of Race Relations asks what role the media played in inflaming opinion against asylum-seekers there. Read the report at ⌘ <http://www.irr.org.uk/kollum> or contact Arun Kundnani, Institute of Race Relations, 2-6 Leeke Street, London WC1X 9HS ☎ +44 (0)20-7837 0041 📠 +44 (0)20-7278 0623

STEP

The Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP) provides a number of resources. Check the website

✉ www.mhie.ac.uk/~step/index.html or contact the address below. The report Travellers at School: The Experience of Parents, Pupils and Teachers by Gwynedd Lloyd, Joan Stead and Betty Jordan (£5 + £1p&p), explores how issues of discipline and exclusion are viewed by Travellers and by teachers.

STEP are at the Moray House Institute of Education, Department of Equity Studies and Special Education, University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

☎ 0131 650 1000 📠 651 6511



Spot the Dog

Children all over the world love Spot the Dog, created by Eric Hill in 1980 and published by the English firm Ventura Publishing Ltd. Thanks to an agreement between the author, the Gypsy Research Centre in Paris (acting for the Interface collection) and the Romani Baxt Cultural Foundation, the puppy has added Rukun to his list of names world-wide for the Romani version of his stories. Rukun Goes to School, Where is Rukun? and Rukun's Big Book of Words can be ordered from Editorial Presencia Gitana, Valderrodrigo, 76 y 78, E-28039, Madrid. For further information contact Interface at: Centre de recherches tsiganes, Université René Descartes, 45 rue des Saints-Pères, F-75270, Paris Cedex 06.

Like A Bird In A Cage

Useful information about Travellers in prison is available from Jack Hawkins, Gypsy Liaison Officer, at HM Prison Cardiff. Some Travellers, he says, disappear into the prison system, locked up like a bird in a cage. "There is usually nothing in place to assist them when they need it; to assure them that there are people who care about their needs." If you are an individual or family who wants to express their doubts and fears, or want information on specialist services for imprisoned Travellers, contact Officer Jack Hawkins, at HM Prison, 1 Knox Road, Cardiff CF2 1UG.

bookmarks!

A screenshot of a web browser window. The address bar shows "http://www". The browser has a toolbar with Back, Forward, Stop, Refresh, and Home buttons. Below the toolbar are tabs for "Microsoft Web Sites", "MSN Web Sites", and "Apple". The main content area displays a list of bookmarks with the following text:

www.echr.net
Human rights directory, including recent case law, and a countdown of the number of days until the 1998 Act comes into force.

greekhelsinki.gr/index.html
Human rights in the Balkans.

statewatch.org/index.html
Monitoring the state and civil liberties in the EU.

britishcouncil.org/governance/div/roma/index.htm
Lots of Roma issues information.

shr.aaas.org/escr/thesaurus.htm
Thesaurus of ECOSOC rights violations.

coexistence.net
The Coexistence Initiative seeks to catalyse a global awareness of, and commitment to, creating a world safe for difference.

open.gov.uk/index/orgindex.htm
All things Governmenty, including Acts.

UK newspapers
telegraph.co.uk/
guardianunlimited.co.uk/
the-times.co.uk/

Or go to **wakeupnews.com/wakeup.html** (freeware alarm clock, wakes you up with your favourite online newspapers ready!).

if you have a site please link it to ours:

cf.ac.uk/claws/tlru/

***note that the address has changed slightly since issue 8 -**

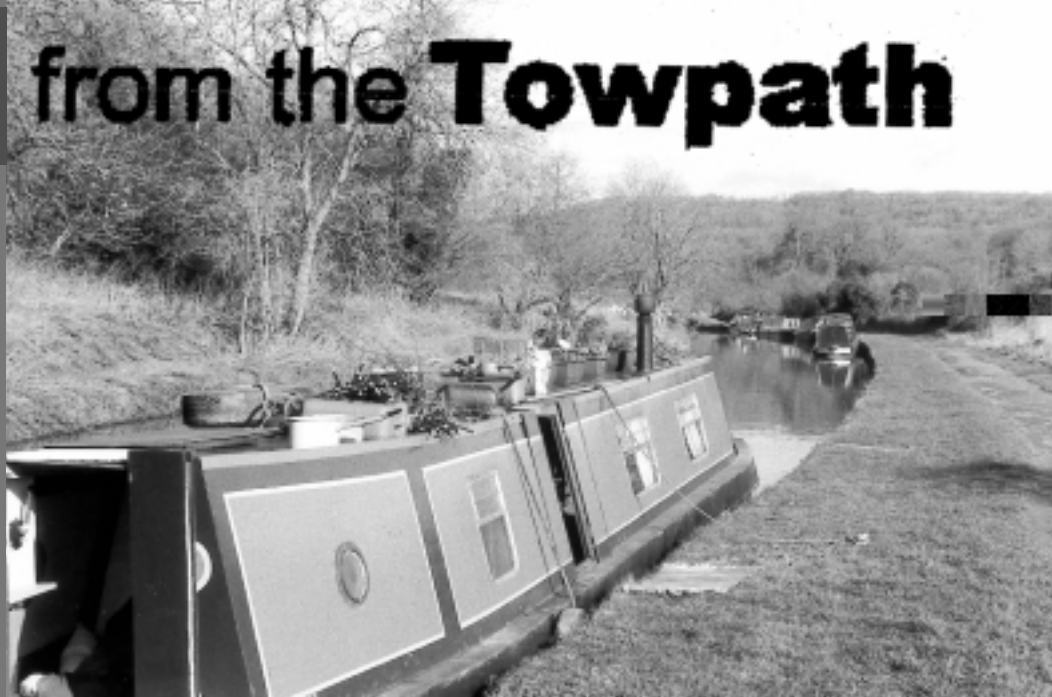
change those bookmarks!

The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Internet zone".

Tales from the Towpath

by Liz Hughes

Traveller Support Worker,
Children's Participation Project,
The Children's Society, Bath.



"Life on the canal has not been plain sailing for the past year and some boat dwellers have felt their lifestyle under threat."

British Waterways (BW), which manages approximately 2000 miles of our waterways, has been attempting to change regulation of boat licensing and in doing so threatened the existence of continuous cruisers.

Currently any pleasure boat on BW canals must hold a valid licence and any boat not displaying one can be prosecuted. BW has the power to remove any vessel from the water and charge the owner with costs incurred in the process. One of the requirements for obtaining a licence is BW must either be satisfied you have a place where you can keep the boat, or that you use it to cruise continuously. The current definition of 'continuous cruising' (CC) is contained in the British Waterways Act 1995: "navigation throughout the period for which consent is valid without remaining continuously in any one place for more than 14 days or such longer period as is reasonable in the circumstances". BW must not believe that a CC is trying to avoid paying a mooring fee. (Unlike canal users with permanent moorings, CCs receive no services so pay the lowest licence fee).

Canal user groups were informed in April 1998 that a new High Intensity License would be introduced for CCs, costing 2.5 times that of the existing CC license. At first BW blamed the need for the change on a majority of the 800 CCs, saying that they flouted the rules causing congestion at popular visitor moorings and costly enforcement issues. (BW in fact have no way of knowing that the people who remain in one place are CCs; many people have a mooring but still travel around the canal system). The rationale was later changed to the resolution of funding and maintenance problems. BW had to shelve the proposal in the face of united opposition from canal users, but in late 1999 they issued a consultation document entitled "What clearly is not continuous cruising". Proposed criteria for establishing whether a vessel was CC were comprehensive and draconian, and likened by boat dwellers to the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in that they sought to prevent certain groups of people from travelling. The criteria looked at whether movement was too infrequent or local, whether cruisers had too many local connections (milk and postal deliveries, electoral registration, children in school) and used land-based services (rubbish, storage, power and animal care facilities).

Due to the outcry about the effects on the lifestyles, access to education and other services, and disenfranchisement, in February of this year BW dropped the 'personal circumstances' elements. New conditions hinge purely on boats having to move within 14 days and a distance of 10 km; not returning to a point within 10 km within 28 days, which is acceptable. However, it is a matter of concern that the group of canal users targeted for change by BW are usually those on the lowest incomes who see living on a boat as affordable accommodation as well as a choice of lifestyle. Their boats often do not conform to traditional images of canal craft. Canal-side property developers often view 'colourful' boats and inhabitants as inconsistent with the landscape and values they desire for their properties. The 14 day rule already existed so, if there really is a problem with CCs clogging up moorings unlawfully, it is not new legislation but better enforcement that is needed.

Continuous cruisers provide positive and attractive elements to our waterways that BW should look to support and preserve, and are in keeping with the sustainable development principles of Agenda 21 and other planning policies. They increase safety by their presence along canals and in some cases their crafts draw visitors to canal areas. It is to be hoped that BW will no longer attack water Travellers but will recognise the benefits of diversity to sustain vibrant canal communities and resources.



by **Dan Draper**

Case Worker

Isle of Wight

Independent Housing Advice Centre

"Travellers have become an issue on the Isle of Wight. A small group - originally a community of 12 looking to live an alternative lifestyle - have been hounded from one remote unused council site to another for some time by Isle of Wight Unitary Council."

Four have given up due to the hassle and gone into housing. Alternative lifestyles are not new to the Isle. Soon after World War One, some people were disenchanted by what they had witnessed during the war and around Britain a small number of what were seen as 'cults' sprang up, most of which attracted hostility from the gate keepers of town and village conventionality. Following WWII, in small coastal IOW harbours, redundant small ex-naval vessels with their engines removed were converted into cosy floating homes and many families lived happily together, accepted by the communities at large. For many this was a good way of overcoming the shortage of post-war housing, but gradually mooring sites for floating homes became targets for property developers who saw large profit potential in the emerging floating leisure sector. A travelling lifestyle has helped people change their life patterns. Here on the Isle of Wight there is an example, who I will call Jimmy. He was brought up by his parents in a council house home, and left in his late teens due to overcrowding. The combination of lack of job opportunities and unemployment in the 1980s saw Jimmy living in cramped bedsits, often of a very poor standard. Living in such conditions can drive people to find ways out and Jimmy's was drink. This led him to become aggressive and constantly in trouble with the police. Since Jimmy started travelling the police see him as a changed person, able to support himself as a self-employed odd-job man. But where do Travellers and their families go? The Isle of Wight Council recently advised a solicitor that his Traveller client might "move with his vehicle to one of the authorised sites provided by mainland Authorities", and have recently resolved that the provision of an authorised site would be 'inappropriate' for the Isle of Wight. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit needs to take urgent action and recommend that the Good Practice Guide to Managing Unauthorised Camping becomes a Statutory Instrument to which local authorities can prove they have regard".

The Isle of Wight Council recently advised a solicitor that his Traveller client might

"move with his vehicle to one of the authorised sites provided by mainland Authorities"

by **Patrick Stokes**

"I am a Traveller born in Ireland in 1955. Having suffered rejection as a child and in adult life, from my fellow Irish men and women, I feel more of an identity as a Traveller than I do as an Irish man. This is not to say that I reject my nationality, rather that I am more likely to introduce myself as a Traveller rather than an Irish man. As a child I would sometimes live with a head teacher and his family, so for some time I was shuttled between the camp and this settled family's house; they were a lovely family. It was here that I first became very familiar with the word integration. I missed a lot of school, but I am a firm believer in education and my desire is to see educated Travellers living and working in society without losing their identity, just like other ethnic minorities.

When I came to London I found complete intolerance of Travellers by local authorities and police. At this time Travellers camped in fairly large groups in London and there was a sense of Community, no written rules but, when the police called, we were very much together in these large camps, I soon felt at home. In the evenings the men would meet to discuss where the next camp would be or agree to look at a potential camp. As time went on it was very clear to me that we would soon have real problems finding camps. After the new 1994 laws and quick evictions came in Travellers found their way of life intolerable; we were used to staying for weeks or months in one camp. There was a rush from Travellers to get onto sites, but with sites full many families opted for housing. My wife and I also made this choice.

if only your house
had wheels you
could just

At present some Travellers are trying to carry on their nomadic way of life but getting only two or four days in a camp before being moved on. Once a London policeman said to me "You people are Travellers, we will make sure that is what you do". It seems to me this is the strategy today, run Travellers into the ground, or rather into housing. Travellers on sites enjoy a respite from this situation, they live with other Travellers, and this brings a sense of belonging and community, if nothing else their neighbours are like-minded. There is the concern about the children who marry and where they will live, but on the whole there is a consensus that there is no need to worry now. But I see a worrying pattern of traditional camping being brought to an end and sites slowly being closed down and where do the residents go? The obvious answer is housing.

In housing Travellers face an awful sense of loss, torn from their environment of friends and family, they are isolated and although living on an estate full of people they feel totally alone. The bills that mount up, the children home from school bullied again, neighbours exercising

their dogs in the playground but your children can't play there because they are isolated or abused. Your home has no wheels but you are still a Traveller, something to be shunned by the settled community around you. You have to get away, move to another house, start again, if only your house had wheels you could just move on. The Traveller woman who once took pride in her caravan now sits bored and depressed, deprived of the companionship of like-minded women, her house more of a prison than a home.



I see other ethnic minorities of the same identity housed together on estates but Travellers are broken up and housed separately. This amounts to a policy of segregation. We have groups of Travellers living together on sites; there must be changes to housing policy so we can be housed side by side. I believe sites should be as permanent as houses with proper tenancy agreements and the residents having the right to buy if they choose, in other words the same rights as house dwellers. While local authorities preach equality and integration, they themselves reek of institutionalised prejudice against Travellers. For example, anti-Traveller signs in pub windows. Our children read this illegal muck on their way to school, their first lesson of the day. Why are we not seen as an ethnic

group? Why do police and local authorities turn a blind eye? Why do our children continue to be scarred and pained?"

(with thanks to **Yvonne MacNamara** at BIAS Irish Travellers Project)

Open Letter To Tony Blair

To all Government ministers:

I am writing to whoever wishes to listen or hear the plight of the Gypsies. We are an ethnic minority but we feel we do not get treated fairly, we are perceived as thieves, violent, and basically scum. By most of the rest of the public, and people in government and high society. My plea to the Government and local councils is this.

Since 1994 local councils have closed down 49 caravan sites which has put many of us back to travelling the highways and byways of this great country. We cannot stop more than a few nights at a time, we are told or ordered to move on. So we do. But it repeats itself over and over again, from John O'Groats to Lands End. Councils move us on to other councils.

This could all stop if local councils built caravan sites for us Gypsies. Just because some councils have one caravan site in their area they say "we have met our obligation to the Gypsy community", 16 or 20 plots on a site is not the entire Gypsy community. We are a race of wandering people but Government has stopped this. We try to settle but as I said before we are told to move. Some of us have stopped roaming and now we are in houses but even this puts pressure on councils to rehouse us. Surely it makes sense to build sites for Gypsies rather trying to find houses or flats, not only for us but for other public citizens.

We are never going to go away. There will always be Gypsies. Just as sure as the "sky is blue"

Gypsy people do not want to live in houses. So my recent suggestion to my local council and MP was this: if the Council built a site for us we would move onto it and let the backlog of people wishing to move into houses move in instead of the Council putting people in bed and breakfasts. Surely this makes sense, it is a scheme that could work or at least be tried. If Gypsies but their own land, 9 out of 10 times they cannot get planning permission to make their own sites. So what are we to do? We are never going to go away. There will always be Gypsies. Just as sure as the sky is blue.

I have recently seen on TV about race discrimination. We Gypsies are one of the most discriminated against groups in British history. But throughout the years and all the different governments nearly nobody has spoken on behalf of us Gypsies. I think it is because they are scared of losing votes so they turn their backs on us. And my question is why, what are you scared of? Speak to us. Tell us what we have done to deserve the way we are treated. You see on TV programmes of other ethnic groups but you rarely see one of Gypsies because they do not want to know nothing about us. But we have survived hundreds of years of abuse and we will go on surviving.

In the second world war 500,000 Gypsies died in concentration camps. It is very rare this is mentioned but it's true. Many Gypsies fought for this country in the wars. My grandfather and his brother in fact Tom and Jim Gregory. My grandfather's brother was shot and wounded in France while fighting for his country. It's a fact many people don't know because we never get recognition of it. Gypsies won't cry or beg for this. This is what makes us the hardy people we are, it is because we are proud of what we are and that is to be a GYPSY.

Terry Green

(with thanks to **Kate Green** at the **Sutton Traveller Education Service** and to all those who speak to wipe out racism)



Policy and Law

National Census

The ten year National Census, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which runs it, is the most complete source of social and demographic statistics available because it seeks to include everyone. But Gypsies and Travellers will, as usual, be unlisted in the 2001 Census.

The Census is important in helping central and local government, health authorities and other organisations to plan such services as future housing needs and planning. Because they don't really 'appear' on the forms, Gypsies and other Travellers are often left out of Social Care Plans, Children's Services Plans, governmental advice and so on.

The ONS want to encourage Gypsies and Travellers to take part in the Census by persuading them to tick the box marked 'Other' on the Census forms. Since the information is strictly confidential, it's safe and sensible so stand up and be counted!

If you would like to be a Census community supporter contact:

Pat Mann, Community Liaison Project Manager, 2001 Census
Office for National Statistics,
Segensworth Road, Titchfield,
Fareham, Hampshire PO15 5RR

☎ 01329 813733 📠 01329 813532
✉ pat.mann@ons.gov.uk
⌘ www.ons.gov.uk/census/

Anti Social Behaviour

"I am aware that significant numbers of Irish Traveller lads are being considered for Anti Social Behaviour Orders," writes Anne Walker. "In Manchester the majority of Travellers move into houses while they are in the city and the Crime and Disorder legislation seems to be affecting housed families rather than those on sites."

Traveller lads, she says, seem to feature disproportionately while eviction from housing for the whole family seems to accompany consideration of an ASBO for an individual. Eviction can be accompanied by blacklisting which seems to follow families into every housing association and local authority housing department in the country.

"If this is monitored, I would like to identify why it is happening rather than the monitoring being used to prove something about Travellers". Anne Walker can be contacted at ✉ annewalker@lineone.net

Gypsies who settle on private sites do not necessarily lose their Gypsy status.

Reporting of the recent Hearne case involving Gypsies and planning did not include important passages of the High Court and Court of Appeal judgements, according to London barrister Alan Masters.

"Page 12 of the transcript Lord Justice Pill accepted the reverse proposition, i.e. 'that gypsy status may be maintained even on what is described as a site for settled occupation'. It was because Mr Hearne not only intended to settle permanently but also expressed an intention to give up his Gypsy status that the decision went against him. I consider that the decision was in fact very helpful to Gypsies intending to settle down, in that for the first time in a High Court or Court of Appeal decision (apart from Hearne at first instance) it was specifically recognised that Gypsy status may be maintained on a site for settled occupation."

The new Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 13

highlights local authorities' obligations towards Travellers.

"Local planning authorities should work jointly with housing departments to assess the range of needs for different types and sizes of housing across all tenures in their area. This should include ... housing to help meet the needs of specific groups - the elderly, the disabled, students ... key workers, travellers and occupiers of mobile homes and houseboats".

⌘ www.planning.detr.gov.uk/ppg3/index.htm

Gypsy Lore Society Newsletter

The February 2000 newsletter of the Gypsy Lore Society reported that New Jersey is to repeal its 'Gypsy Law'. Purported by the New York Times to be the state's "last-known vestige" of official discrimination, the law (enacted in 1917) empowered municipalities to regulate "roving bands of nomads, commonly called Gypsies" by making laws and ordinances to license their transportation, businesses, goods they sold, places where they entertained and where they could rent property.

Environment minister Michael Meacher

has claimed that the government bill promoting the 'right to roam' 'finally brings to reality the dream of Lloyd George, that...

“nobody should be a trespasser in the land of their birth”.

But according to Jake Bowers, the bill falls far short of reality. The bill, he writes in an article published in the Big Issue (South West), actively excludes Travellers from enjoying proposed new rights of countryside access.

The Countryside and Rights of Way bill seeks to register all uncultivated land, such as commons, heaths and mountain land, so that it can be opened to public access. But the bill is criticised by Travellers as a "most blatant example of exclusion" because anybody attempting to camp, light fires or take horses onto the estimated 10% of British land which is uncultivated will forfeit the new right and be classified as trespassers.

Tony Juniper, campaigns director of Friends of the Earth says that the bill should "accommodate Traveller's legitimate rights to travel, rights that were criminalised under the Criminal Justice Act. We believe that only when minorities are given unfettered countryside access will they 'buy in' to the idea of environmental protection".

Times Law Reports,

April 4 2000,
Court of Appeal,
Countryside Residential (North Thames)
Ltd v Tugwell

(judgement, March 6).

A licence granted to developers for the purposes of access to land to carry out surveys and technical investigations prior to obtaining planning permission did not provide effective control over the land giving rise to a sufficient interest for the purpose of obtaining an order for possession against trespassers. It was important not to confuse contractual rights, in relation to which the developers might well have rights against any person who sought to interfere, with the right of possession, which was the foundation of an Order 113 remedy.

THE TRAVELLER LAW RESEARCH UNIT

is in the process of redrafting the Traveller Law Reform Bill following meetings at which many people generously gave of their time and ideas. If you would like to comment on the second draft of the Bill, which puts into legislative form the key law reforms agreed upon in Gaining Ground (Travellers' Times Issue 8) and are not already on the mailing list to receive Bill-related information, contact TLRU - details on back page.

Lord Avebury Speech

On Tuesday 14 December 1999, during the Second Reading of the Race Relations (Amendment) Bill, Lord Avebury made a fine speech in which he referred to **Jack Straw's radio remarks about Travellers and the Smith case (see TT issue 8), and excessive police raids on Gypsy sites**, as examples of the importance of strengthening race relations laws and tackling institutionalised racism. Lord Sheppard also talked about such racism and acknowledged that it happens in relation to many groups including Gypsies.

Gypsies and Travellers have friends in high places as well as foes.



Picture
Nicole Richard

A European travellers organisation is looking for "a good solid project proposal" in the educational field.

Founded in the late eighties, EFECOT - The European Federation for the Education of the Children of Occupational Travellers - works for good educational provision for children whose parents travel for occupational reasons such as fairground, circus and bargee children.

With the launch of their new 'Policy Plan for the Future' EFECOT is extending its remit to other travelling communities including refugees and Gypsies and they are focussing on issues such as parental involvement, lifelong learning and improving secondary education for Travellers.

"plans need implementation," says spokesperson Griet Provoost, and EFECOT therefore invites any person, organisation or institute, active in the field of traveller education.

Contact EFECOT if you would like to receive our full Policy Plan and/or our leaflet with a short summary (languages: English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish):

EFECOT, Rue de la Limite 6, B-1210 Brussels.

☎ +32-2-2274060 📠 +32-2-2274069
✉ efecot@efecot.net 🌐 <http://www.efecot.net>

Citizen Traveller

is a campaign by the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) to create better understanding between the Travelling and settled communities. Launched earlier this year, Citizen Traveller also aims to redress the settled community's misconceptions about the 22,000 Travellers living in the Republic of Ireland.

According to ITM spokeswoman Jacinta Brack the campaign was the first of its kind in Europe, although a similar one had been successful for Aboriginal people in Australia. "As well as promoting a better understanding of Travellers the campaign aims to encourage Travellers to take pride in their own cultural identity."

Citizen Traveller will run for three years and target not only communities but key opinion leaders such as politicians, the judiciary, gardaí and the media.

The ITM are at 4-5 Eustace Street, Dublin 2, Ireland ☎ 00 3531 679 6577 (2 6578).

Roma children in Czech Republic schools.

Travellers' Times issue 8 mentioned the plight of Roma children in Czech Republic schools. The parents of 18 Gypsy children in Ostrava have lodged an application with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg accusing the Czech state of practising racial discrimination and segregation in the education system. The Czech government has conceded that nation-wide 75% of Romany children attend special schools, making up over half of the special schools' population. "Romany children simply do not have a high enough IQ to manage normal schooling," said Marta Tepla of the Ministry of Education. "If you studied anything about them, you would know that they stick together, they get married in those large families, and they have children with genetic problems. "You can see this just by looking at their names," she added. "I hope that if we win the case my daughter can go back into the mainstream system, but even if that happens she won't have won the battle against racism," said Berta Cervenakova. Her daughter was transferred to a special school three years ago despite achieving average marks at primary school. One boy was evaluated as mentally handicapped because he could not name "cutlery" as the common noun for "knife", "fork" and "spoon"; there is no such word in Romani.

"Romany children simply do not have a high enough IQ to manage normal schooling,"

Hall of Shame

"DNA TEST URGED ON GYPSY STOOLS"

reported the Milton Keynes on Sunday last August. The paper was covering Stony Stratford Councillor Paul Bartlett's claim that swabs resulting from DNA tests could link individual Travellers to human waste on unauthorised encampments. This would allow police to bring charges against them.

The idea was rejected by Thames Valley police and other local politicians while the newspaper described the idea as 'radical' rather than 'racist'.

Life in the Slow Lane

according to the Guardian's Travel section (12 February 2000) "doesn't come more languid than a weekend's clop in a rented gypsy [sic] caravan."

"Free to go where I want, stop where I fancy? Sadly, not quite. Your suggested route will keep to roads with room for cars to pass and avoid gradients too steep for the horse. Overnight stopovers on farms or alongside beaches are never far from pubs and restaurants..." (as long as they've got no 'No Travellers' signs up? Ed.).

From 'Arcade: the Videogames Magazine' (Jan 2000, Issue 15, page 61): "Pokemon Stadium 2'. Format: Nintendo 64. Developer: Nintendo Publisher: Nintendo. On sale in UK: TBA. This Pokemon spin-off title will enable you to connect your game-boy to the N64 to pit your trained-up monsters against each other in full colour. Stacks of bizarre mini-games involve "electric shock torture, sushi and thieving gypsies".

"A hate-crime case which lasted almost three years ended yesterday with the dismissal of all charges against four adults and two youths," according to the Toronto Star (27 March 2000). "In delivering his verdict, Mr. Justice Russell Otter said the crown failed to prove the case against the six skinheads who were charged with promoting hate against Roma people in an August, 1997, during demonstrations outside a Kingston Road motel. Although defence lawyer Peter Lindsay never argued against the claim that the six accused were at the protest, he said they did not demonstrate hate against the Roma people.

"There was no evidence whatsoever established by the crown that there was wilful promotion of hatred against the Roma," Otter said. About 25 protesters had gathered outside the Lido Motel where Czech Roma refugee claimants were staying. They chanted and carried placards reading Honk if You Hate Gypsies and Canada is not a trash can. Some of the protesting skinheads wore scarves over their faces and carried a flag bearing a Nazi swastika. However the case was dismissed because the charges referred to Roma and not Gypsy, said Otter.

"It's general knowledge to everybody except this court that Gypsy and Roma are synonymous," said Ronald Lee from the Roma Community and Advocacy Centre in Toronto. "I wouldn't think it would be necessary - if this sign had said Negroes - to prove that Negroes meant blacks."

Copyright (c) 2000 Toronto Star

Radio Kerry reported that up to 60% of phone calls received agreed with Cllr Cahill's views, but Fianna Fail deputy Chris Flood said the remarks were deeply offensive and did not reflect the party's position.

THE MODEM IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

claims the **Campaign Against Racism and Fascism** - www.carf.demon.co.uk/ and the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC) - www.ncadc.demon.co.uk/.

They had organised an electronic protest in which over 1,000 emails were sent to the Daily Mail and London Evening Standard protesting as the newspapers' coverage of asylum seeker issues. The Guardian Diary for 20 April reported that the Mail "seems to be in retreat from its usual splenetic frenzy on right-wing causes ... Management at the paper have been rattled by the hostile response from readers over its asylum rantings, and staff are unhappy to find themselves targeted by protests".

The Hackney Refugee and Migrant Support Group also held a protest in April outside the offices of the Mail and the Standard to show opposition to consistent inflammatory attacks on asylum seekers. Supporters included the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, Campaign Against Racism & Fascism and the National Assembly Against Racism. Over 100 people attended, chanting "Daily Mail - Hate Mail, Evening Standard - racist standards".

A Fianna Fail Councillor in the Republic of Ireland has apologised for his remarks that **"it was in the nature of travellers to cause trouble, to steal and to do the system"**. He had also suggested placing tracking devices in Travellers' homes so that Councils could trace the Travellers.

Councillor Cahill, a Rossbeigh businessman who is also Chairman of the Southern Health Board, made his remarks during a debate on Radio Kerry over a government scheme to give Travellers grants of £500 and loans of up to £5,000 to purchase caravans.

UP TO DATE - AND FREE OF CHARGE

The Traveller Law Research Unit's County / Unitary Authority Based Directory of Traveller-Related Contacts in England and Wales is up to date in Word 6 format and is available free of charge to all those listed in it - £10 for those not listed - by sending a clean, IBM-formatted disc and self-addressed padded envelope to the TLRU office. Cheques should be made payable to 'Cardiff University'. Any organisation which is not listed but wishes to be, can contact TLRU. Other publications available free of charge from the office or www.cf.ac.uk/claws/tlru/:

* Factsheets on the Human Rights Act 1998; how to make press complaints; international Conventions to which the UK is a signatory; the position of Gypsies and Travellers under current Race Relations legislation; and the law relating to the stopping of vehicles.

* Articles on voting rights, law reform, and the planning system.

* A list of useful websites.

* Summary of the key points arising from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.

A lot of people refer to TLRU as the 'Traveller Law Reform Unit'. Because TLRU is academic rather than an active campaigning group, the name is 'Traveller Law Research Unit'. (It is crucial to

our continued funding that the distinction be made - thank you). Cardiff telephone numbers have changed. Please note the changes to our contact details:

Traveller Law Research Unit, Cardiff Law School, P O Box 427, Cardiff University, Cardiff CF10 3XJ

☎ 029 2087 4580 📠 029 2087 4097

✉ tlru-l@cf.ac.uk 🌐 www.cf.ac.uk/claws/tlru/

If you would you like extra copies of Travellers' Times to distribute to Travelling people on sites, in houses and on road sides, or to other people you think may find it useful, just let TLRU know how many.

Travellers' Times needs local news! Anyone know of anything going on locally in the UK, and/or with local Gypsy and Traveller organisations? Thanks for your help, in anticipation...

**THE THIRD CONFERENCE ON
TRAVELLER LAW REFORM will be held
in London on Wednesday 20th
September 2000. Please contact TLRU if
you'd like to book and for further details.**

HELP

Millennibrum Project.

Travellers and Gypsies in Birmingham are being asked to contribute to the city's Millennibrum Project.

Birmingham Council has commissioned the Digital Media Centre (DMC) to make 1,000 five-minute videos of people talking about their thoughts and feelings about Birmingham.

"We are trying to involve a complete cross section of the local community and would really like some of the Travellers and Gypsies in the city to participate," says Millennibrum's Joanne Adnams.

Contact DMC at:

Gosta Green,

Corporation Street, Birmingham B47 DX

☎ 0121 331 7819

📠 0121 333 6020

✉ jadnams@hotmail.com

Initiative Project

The Initiative Project is looking for a long term low impact traveller site with space for

ten pitches, gardens and a semi-permanent community space. A group of people working on creative, environmental and community projects, the Initiative Project would like to live in a rural area on a site that is safe for their children. "We are willing to pay an affordable rent and have the option to borrow between £8,000 and £10,000 to buy land." If you can offer help and advice contact the Project c/o Mel at the Trolley Theatre

☎ 0117 939 3903

✉ trolleytheatre@bigfoot.com

Foundation for Self-Reliance

Steven O'Neill Project Co-ordinator for the non-profit making Hungarian Foundation for Self-Reliance is hoping to establish links with organisations and individuals concerned with Roma issues. Steven who is also organising a project to provide financial and professional support for refugees in Hungary wanting to establish a small business can be contacted in Budapest, Hungary - ✉ stevenoneill@hotmail.com. Read about the Foundation on www.autonomia.hu.

Calling all Planners

Calling all planners and planning lawyers! Won a case / appeal / inquiry which might not be reported but which might be useful to others in your profession acting for Gypsies and other Travellers? Send details to Travellers' Times so it can be shared. And if you know a trainee or newly qualified solicitor interested in working on cases with Gypsy and Traveller clients, Lance Kent and Co, a general practice in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire need a keen new member of staff. Contact Diana Allen ☎ 01442 879628 or Jeremy Brown ☎ 01494 772788.

PICTURE THIS

is a nation-wide photography project to create a visual archive for the future. Photographs from PICTURE THIS will feature in the Travellers' Times and make the magazine more accessible to Gypsies and other Travellers.

Travellers' Times needs Gypsies and other Travellers to photograph their lives and tell their stories.

There are Free Camera Packs for Gypsies and other Travellers.

Call us if you know of:

- any Gypsy and other Traveller photographers who'd like to be involved;
- any places where photography projects for young Gypsies and other Travellers could be started;
- any Gypsies and other Travellers who have old photographs they would like copied and archived.

Picture This has been set up by Travellers' Times and The Rural Media Company and is funded by Comic Relief.

☎ 01222 874580

📠 01222 874097

✉ tlru-l@cf.ac.uk

🌐 www.cf.ac.uk/uwcc/claws/tlru/



The Rural Media Company

is a national media and communications charity based in the rural West Midlands.

The Company initiates projects and undertakes commissions for community, public and independent organisations.

Using photography, print, design, video and radio, the company works creatively, often combining art and media forms to communicate in powerful and original ways. The Company's approach is collaborative, working in partnership with key agencies to ensure sustained support for communities involved in projects and productions. Its work on rural issues and issues of disability and equal opportunities is particularly well established.

The Rural Media Company, Sullivan House, 72-80 Widemarsh Street, Hereford HR4 9HG

☎ 01432 344039 📠 01432 270539 ✉ info@ruralmedia.co.uk 🌐 www.ruralmedia.co.uk

