

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month

What is Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month?

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month, or GRTHM, celebrates the variety that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities bring to the UK, through their skills and talents.

Many years ago, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers were groups of people who might have moved from place to place, however, now that is not the case. Most Gypsies, Roma and Travellers live in houses or permanent sites, but some choose to live in caravans and travel around. They have their own beliefs, histories, cultures and languages.

GRTHM has been celebrated in some schools since 2001 but was recognised by the Department for Education in 2007, and is now celebrated throughout the UK during June.

History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have been part of British society for over 500 years. The first mention of a Gypsy in England was in 1514.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities have faced persecution and mistreatment through people's lack of understanding and judgemental attitudes.



Aims of GRTHM:

- improve awareness of Travelling communities;
- develop respect and understanding about traditional Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ways of life;
- encourage positive links between communities.

Interesting Information

- Many Gypsies and Travellers traditionally worked on farms, for example, fruit picking, harvesting and planting.
- Many have adapted their skills to work in landscaping, gardening, laying tarmac, motor trading, scrap metal dealing and tree felling, however, Gypsies and Travellers work in a variety of professions and careers. There are Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people who work in the Police Force, as politicians, and teachers.

- Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are three separate ethnic groups with different histories, cultures and languages.
- All three groups traditionally lived nomadic lives, moving to different places.
- Now most Gypsies, Roma and Travellers live in houses. Some people choose to travel around and live in caravans and some people live in caravans that stay in one place for most of the year.

Problems Faced by Gypsies and Travellers

Views about Gypsies and Travellers are often wrong due to a lack of information. GRTHM aims to change this, and teach people about their traditional lifestyles and the importance of the histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures. Gypsies and Travellers face regular racism and negative attitudes on a daily basis.

Not enough authorised camp sites mean there are less places for people who travel to stay for a short time.

Famous Gypsies and Travellers

Django Reinhardt was brought up in the Belgian Sinti Gypsy community in 1910 and became the first and most important European jazz musician of all time, playing the guitar, banjo and violin.

Flamenco dancing in Spain came from the Gypsy community, and the Romany Diamonds are a popular Polish music group. There have been many writers, artists and musicians who grew up in a variety of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Fascinating Fact

Most Gypsies and Travellers call caravans, 'trailers' and a mobile home on a site is called a 'chalet'.



Questions

1. When did GRTHM start to be celebrated around the UK?

Select one answer.

2000

2002

2007

2008

2. In the past, where did Gypsies and Travellers live?

3. Match up these sentences:

a. Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

the month of June.

b. GRTHM is celebrated during

a word meaning 'caravan'.

c. A trailer is

are three separate ethnic groups.

4. Which of the following statements are aims of GRTHM? Tick two.

To develop respect and understanding.

To encourage people's misconceptions.

To encourage people to travel.

To improve awareness of Travelling communities.

5. Give two examples of jobs Gypsies and Travellers did in the past.

6. Complete the sentence:

Not enough authorised sites means

7. Give two facts about Django Reinhardt.

8. Romany Diamonds is:

A type of jewellery.

A type of caravan.

A Polish music group.

A clothing range.