



*Showwoman and Parish Councilor Sue Peak, one of the 100 Gypsies and Travellers interviewed for this research with granddaughter. Photo: Matt Cardy.*

## 2. Methodology

The research consisted of two elements: research within the existing museums, libraries and archives community to identify current good practice, and action research within the community to identify ways of building upon this good practice. Existing good practice was documented where possible as tangible examples of how Gypsy and Traveller heritage is currently preserved, celebrated and represented. The current good practice served as a departure point from which to develop innovative ideas to further improve the representation of Gypsy and Traveller culture within the region's museums, libraries and archives.

The community research consisted of two stages. An initial series of qualitative, in-depth interviews with leading Gypsy and Traveller activists, historians, family history researchers and craftsmen focused on common themes and ideas about how those already looking at heritage issues would like to see the Gypsy and Traveller heritage work develop. The insights gained by these interviews are repeated and attributed throughout this research. See qualitative stage below.

A second series of interviews informed wider ranging, but less in depth, quantitative interviews which consulted Gypsies and

Travellers of all ethnic backgrounds and accommodation situations in all south eastern counties about how the community would like to see its history and culture preserved and represented. The quantitative research also examined existing use of and attitudes towards museums, libraries and archives in order to provide a baseline with which to judge whether long term work has been successful. Half of these 100 interviews were done by the author, but the other 30% were done by Traveller Education Service or other local authority staff in an attempt to increase the sample size, geographical coverage and statistical validity. A further

20% of results were gained through sending the questionnaire out to members of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society (RTFHS). The responses from all quantitative interviews were recorded anonymously. But the ethnic background, sex, age and accommodation status were recorded to ensure the research was balanced and broadly representative.

The interviews took place individually or in small groups, with the written consent of their parents if they were under 16. The interviews were recorded by a third party filling in a standard questionnaire. The interviews took place at a time and a location chosen by the person interviewed.

The questionnaire consisted of a mix of open and closed questions. Results from the closed questions (those with a yes, no, or don't know response) have been analysed and are presented as statistics within this report. Results from the open questions provide themes to be explored later in this report. See appendix 2.

### Qualitative stage:

Before starting this research, personal experience suggested that while public museums, libraries and archives have already gone some way to engaging Gypsies and Travellers, the greatest work by far to preserve the community's heritage had been done by private individuals and institutions. The qualitative stage therefore focused on in-depth

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interviews with 8 of these movers and shakers.

They were:

- Janet Keet-Black of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society.
- Gypsy activist and author Len Smith who designed the Romany Museum at Paulton's Park in Hampshire.
- Gary, Obie and Frank Brazil who have received heritage lottery funding for their private Romany museum in Marden, Kent.
- Henry and Paula Elliott who are establishing a Romani museum in Cranbrook, Kent.
- Gypsy historian Simon Evans in Kent.

All of these individuals live within the south-east region. And all of these individuals, with the exception of Simon Evans - who has done a lot to improve the representation of Gypsies and Travellers in

museums and libraries - are from the community.

Their insights, as people who have not only helped invent the wheel of preserving Gypsy and Traveller heritage, but set it in motion, were invaluable in setting the agenda in this research.

All ethnic and occupational Traveller communities were included. Roma refugees from Eastern Europe were not included, because although they form part of the wider Gypsy community in Britain, their experience of being excluded from mainstream services differs from indigenous communities because of differences in lifestyle and national origin.

The communities were:

- English Romanies
- Irish Travellers
- New Travellers
- Showmen

The south-east is home to the second highest population of Gypsies and Travellers according to the Office of the Deputy Prime Ministers Bi-annual Caravan Count.<sup>1</sup> Despite being recognised as separate ethnic minorities under British race relations legislation (by a decision of the Court of Appeal: see Commission for Racial Equality v Dutton, Court of Appeal, 1988), English Gypsies and Irish Travellers are absent from the census and most forms of ethnic monitoring. But there is strong evidence that Gypsies and Travellers represent the largest ethnic minority in counties such as Kent, Hampshire and Surrey and are significant minorities in many other south-eastern counties.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Biannual Gypsy Caravan count see: [http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_housing/documents/page/odpm\\_house\\_027373.hcsp](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_027373.hcsp)

is also strong.

The following tables show the number and diversity of subjects that were interviewed. There is a natural bias towards greater representation in the three counties of Hampshire, Surrey and Kent where Gypsy and Traveller numbers are large and the political will to celebrate Traveller heritage

These numbers are broadly balanced and were constantly reviewed to deliberately reflect the diverse backgrounds and accommodation situations that Travellers experience. The consensus among Travellers groups and researchers is that approxi-

mately 50% of traditional Travellers are now housed. Of those remaining in caravans, 70% are thought to be living on either private or public sites and 30% are living in unauthorised (roadside) encampments. It also is based upon the assumption that 80% of Travellers in the south east are Romani and

### Number of ethnic Travellers interviewed by county and ethnic background

	Romani	Irish	Total
Surrey, Bracknell Forest / Slough / Windsor and Maidenhead / Wokingham / Reading, Berkshire	24	4	28
Kent / Medway / Thames Gateway, Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex	22	4	26
Hampshire / Southampton / Portsmouth / IoW, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes / Oxfordshire	23	2	25
Total	69	10	79

## Number of occupational (non-ethnic) Travellers interviewed by county

	Showmen / Circus	New Traveller	Total
Surrey, Bracknell Forest / Slough / Windsor and Maidenhead / Wokingham / Reading, Berkshire	3	3	6
Kent / Medway / Thames Gateway, Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex	5	5	10
Hampshire / Southampton / Portsmouth / IoW, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes / Oxfordshire	3	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>

Note: Unlike ethnic Travellers occupational Travellers are defined by their lifestyle. That is, an occupational Traveller ceases to be a Traveller as soon as they move into bricks and mortar.

## Accommodation situations of those interviewed

	Public site	Private site	House	Roadside	Total
Surrey, Bracknell Forest / Slough / Windsor and Maidenhead / Wokingham / Reading, Berkshire	6	7	12	6	31
Kent / Medway / Thames Gateway, Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex	10	4	9	10	33
Hampshire / Southampton / Portsmouth / IoW, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes / Oxfordshire	10	10	12	4	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

This research actively sought to consult Gypsies and Travellers in housing as part of a conscious attempt to include the hidden majority within an invisible minority.

20% are of Irish Traveller heritage.

## Travellers in houses

An estimated 50% of all Travellers are now housed, either through choice, or often through lack of accommodation. But statutory and voluntary services are primarily targeted towards Travellers living in caravans, whether at the roadside or on private or public sites. They are, after all, the most visible part of the Traveller population, but like the tip of an iceberg they do not represent what lies beneath the surface. In some cases this is understandable, Traveller Education Services, for example, specifically target Travellers living in caravans or on Gypsy sites and have difficulty identifying housed Travellers, often because they do not reveal their ethnic backgrounds to education authorities.

But in other cases, however, service providers are still very much using a gorgia (non-Gypsy) definition of what a Traveller is. That is, they are defined by their lifestyle (living in caravans) rather than by their ethnicity. But an English Romani or Irish Traveller does not lose their culture and heritage as soon as they move into housing. Research suggests that Travellers in housing are often more vulnerable to ill health, racist abuse, isolation and assimila-

tion.<sup>2</sup>

Travellers in housing appear to be at either ends of the wealth spectrum. They are either in houses because they are wealthy enough to buy their own houses and have chosen to live that way, or they have been forced into social housing. Whether in housing through choice or compulsion, travellers in housing are often in the most urgent need of service provision and arguably have the most to gain from accessing and celebrating their cultural heritage. They are isolated from their community, unable to live a traditional lifestyle, and sometimes, because of this, in conflict with those around them. For many in housing, the picture is bleak and their accommodation is perceived as a very real attempt to assimilate them into mainstream gorgia (non-Gypsy) society.

Therefore, this research actively sought to consult Gypsies and Travellers in housing as part of a conscious attempt to include the hidden majority within an invisible minority.

## Age and Sex

35% of those interviewed were men and 65% were women. 14% were under 16, 17% were aged between 17 and 30, 41% were between 31 and 45, 27% were between 46 and 65, and 1% were

over 65.

## Accessible to all

This research is presented in two forms: the written research you are currently reading and an audio form.

The audio form of this research consists of a 20 minute audio documentary featuring the executive summary and highlights of the quantitative and qualitative interviews. The research is presented in an audio form because many within the community have limited literacy skills, but still need to be informed of the results. The audio report will also give the community ownership of the research and allow them to press for its recommendations.

The written report, audio interviews and photographs taken will also be incorporated into a DVD used throughout Europe to train heritage professionals as part of ACCU: Access to Cultural Heritage, an EU wide project looking at removing barriers in accessing cultural heritage.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the ill-health experienced by Gypsies and Traveller in England, please see the University of Sheffield report "The Health Status of Gypsy Travellers in England." Available at: [www.shef.ac.uk/scharr](http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr)



*A travelling 'Egyptian' blacksmith being chased from a village. Metal work remains an important trade for some Gypsies and Travellers. Photo from 'Stopping Places: a Gypsy history of south London and Kent' by Simon Evans.*

### 3. Findings

This research has looked at two basic issues: the community's experience of how it has been served by museums, libraries and archives in the south-east in the past, and the way in which it would like to be represented in the future. But none of this can be discussed in isolation from Gypsy history in England, because it is this very history that has informed the experiences, views and attitudes recorded in this report.

#### A short Gypsy history

Ever since Gypsies arrived in Britain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century we have aroused fear, loathing and occasionally fascination. When Henry VIII sat on the throne, the penalty for simply being a Gypsy was execution. The 1554 "Egyptians

Act" forbade Gypsies from entering England and imposed the death penalty on those of us who remained in the country for more than a month

The earliest record found to date in Surrey, dates back to 1<sup>st</sup> March 1569.<sup>3</sup> A copy of a letter sent from the Privy Council to William More describes Queen Elizabeth's concern at disorders created by a "universal negligent and wilful permission of vagabonds and sundry beggars commonly called rogues and in some parts Egyptians [Gypsies]."<sup>4</sup> In October of the same year, a letter from the Privy Council to the High Sheriff and Justices of the Peace in Surrey, orders that "Egyptians" and other rogues be arrested and treated as vagabonds "whereby they may be driven by punishment to change that wicked and dangerous form of life."

In more enlightened times, the death sentence was reduced to transportation. The 1597 Vagrancy Act made it possible for those that "will not be reformed of their roguish kind of life" to be conveyed to "parts beyond the seas". Nowadays, official policy towards Britain's travelling population recommends "toleration". The relationship between Britain and its Gypsy population has come a long way in five centuries, but it still has a long way to go. Many within the community feel its time our culture was not just tolerated, but celebrated.

The twentieth century saw a rise in the conflict between Britain's nomadic and settled population that has still to be resolved. Despite the widespread and continuing closure of traditional stopping places, enough common

<sup>3</sup> Loseley Manuscripts in the Surrey History Centre, Woking. Reference: 6729/11/52

<sup>4</sup> Surrey History Centre reference LM/COR/3/561

land had survived the centuries of enclosure to provide enough lawful stopping places for people whose way of life was or had become nomadic. But in 1960, the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act gave local authorities the power to close the commons to Travellers, which many proceeded to do with great energy. In the 1960s the pressure for the continual eviction of Gypsies with bulldozers and private security firms reached crisis point. In 1964 the leader of the Labour group on Birmingham Council called for "the extermination of the impossibles".

After a wide-ranging campaign of resistance to evictions, a new Caravan Sites Act was passed in 1968, ordering local authorities to provide sites for all Gypsies residing in or resorting to their areas. For the first time in 500 years, the British state had recognised its responsibility to provide secure, legal stopping places for British Gypsies.

Few non-Gypsies have ever visited an official Gypsy site. Many epitomise the definition of a ghetto - a racially segregated and enclosed settlement. Many have been built near rubbish dumps, sewer works or noisy industrial facilities. In 1994, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act removed the legal obligation to provide even these sites. As a result, some local councils have privatised and closed many of the legal stopping places available to

Britain's travelling population. Government policy currently recommends that travellers should house themselves. But Gypsy families that attempt to live on their own land are often denied planning permission. Over 80% of planning applications from settled people are granted consent, while more than 90% of applications from Gypsies are refused. The current conflict over "illegal" Travellers sites is in part caused by this history.<sup>5</sup>

Within the past 50 years the Gypsy and Traveller community has experienced dramatic and often traumatic change as economic change and draconian legislation have undermined its traditionally nomadic way of life. The community's usefulness as agricultural labourers has declined due to mechanisation and the importation of cheaper eastern European and asylum seeker labour. Yet despite the huge upheavals, the community has done its best to preserve its own heritage with the resources it has had at its disposal.

Whenever genuine requests to explore and represent that heritage have come from outside the community they have been enthusiastically responded to. What follows is a description of some of the results of those efforts and the key characters involved in preserving Gypsy and Traveller heritage to be found in the south-east of England.

It is not an exhaustive description

of all the good practice to be found, partly because some of the best examples of work to preserve and celebrate Gypsy and Traveller heritage, such as Peter Ingram's Romani Museum in Selborne Hampshire, no longer exist. But the case studies below do illustrate the general point that the community's heritage has almost exclusively been preserved by private individuals and institutions and largely ignored by public heritage bodies: despite the fact that Gypsies and Travellers probably constitute the south-east's eldest and largest ethnic minority.

The case studies below exemplify some of the good practice that has got the ball rolling. In some cases, they are as a result of partnerships between private institutions and individuals, occasionally they are the result of partnerships between private individuals and public authorities, but they all draw on the dedication of individuals who have dedicated their lives to preserving the community's heritage. Gypsy people usually judge a character on the basis of quality of their work and the company they keep. So there can be no better way of introducing the movers and shakers of Gypsy heritage in the south-east than by what they have already achieved. They haven't just invented the wheel of preserving Gypsy heritage, they have set it in motion and their pioneering work provides solid foundations for future efforts which are discussed later in this report.

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5 In 1997, Research by ACERT (Advisory Committee for the Education of Romanies and Travellers) showed that whereas 80% of all planning applications were accepted, 90 per cent of Gypsy and Traveller applications were initially rejected (although more were passed on appeal). Reference: ACERT and Wilson M. 1997. Directory of Planning Policies for Gypsy Site Provision. Bristol: Policy Press



Obie, Frank and Gary Brazil of the South East Romany Museum, Marden, Kent. Photo: Jake Bowers.

## 4. Private Past: Qualitative Research

### 4.1 The Brazil Family and The South East Romany Museum

[www.medwaytownsrc.co.uk/SERM%20Home.htm](http://www.medwaytownsrc.co.uk/SERM%20Home.htm)

Tel: 01622 831681

Situated in Howlands Lane, Marden in the heart of the Kent countryside, the working museum is in the early stages of development. The museum plans to exhibit Romany culture and life.

It is very much a living museum as the site is the home of the Brazil family. The museum has already had several official visits from

schools, individuals and libraries and is viewed as an important project for bringing Romany culture into the community.

Visitors can expect to see several traditional wagons including those of Reading, Burton and Barrel types, two of which require restoration and pre-date the first world war. Also on display is an assortment of carts and trolleys and large-scale models of Reading and Ledge wagons.

The preservation work, building and painting of wagons is undertaken by the Brazil family in an open workshop that houses

artefacts, wagons, craft tools and items of Romany and Traveller interest.

Future plans include the building of a conference room, wagon shelter, tea room, picnic area and visitor facilities. At present visits are arranged by appointment only and there is no admission fee but donations are gratefully received. The museum has applied for charitable trust status.

Inside their mobile home, Gary, Obie and Frank have a lot to say about the way their culture has been treated in the past and what they are doing. But its Frank that



does most of the talking. Walking into their home, you get to see Gypsy life as it is today and always has been. But not a thing is preserved in a glass case.

Why are you involved in preserving Gypsy and Traveller heritage?

"This has been our way of life ever since I can remember." says Frank. "We've messed about with wagons, all Gypsy type of things. Its just a way of life to us. And now its time for people to see how Gypsies do live and how they carry on."

"Gorgia (non-Gypsy) people used to come down here and say it was like going back in time. They said it was like a museum. So we thought why not turn it in one and show people how we still live!"

They have had a few problems, but still feel that they've achieved a lot and have great plans for the future.

What obstacles have you encountered?

"We've had problems with the local council. They don't like Gypsies in the local area anyway. We've been here for 32 years and the council still treat us like foreigners and outsiders. We've had parties of school children

**"And now its time for people to see how Gypsies do live and how they carry on."**

down here from all over Kent and people have really liked what we are doing. It has opened their eyes to the fact that we are not all vagabonds or rogues."

What more would you like to do?

"In the future what I'd really like to do is get it up and running as a museum. Not just to have nice pretty things on show, but to show everything of the old ways. They weren't all rich people, they had good and they had bad. And I'd like to show all aspects of the Gypsy life, down to the tents, wagons and all the crafts that go along with it, like repairing wagons and bringing them back to the full glory."

## 4.2 Janet Keet-Black, Secretary of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society and Editor of Romany Routes

<http://website.lineone.net/~rtfhs/>

Janet Keet-Black is, by her own admission, no stereotypical Gypsy. As secretary and editor of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society, Janet has helped create a family history society that has probably done more to foster Gypsy and Traveller pride in their history and culture than any other single organisation in the UK. Based in East Sussex, she had this to tell me about her work.

"We collect as much material as possible from archives. But also from the community, simply because we feel it is important before it is all lost. There's an awareness amongst a lot of Gypsies and Travellers that they do want to know about their history and culture now."

Why have you done this?

"Because I'd went to a funeral for my Uncle Jobie and it occurred to me that all the old folk were dying and taking a lot of their history and culture with them. So I decided that I wanted to find out as much as I could before they all went. But unfortunately they have

**" I'd went to a funeral for my Uncle Jobie and it occurred to me that all the old folk were dying and taking a lot of their history and culture with them."**

all gone now.”

What obstacles have you encountered?

“I think in most museums and libraries, when I started out they had never really encountered anybody that wanted to research Gypsies and Travellers. So they didn’t really have any knowledge of what they had, so I found that difficult. So it was ignorance really. I don’t think it occurred to people that Gypsies and Travellers would want to do that kind of thing.”

What have you achieved so far?

“A lot. I think we’ve given a lot of Travellers the confidence to go in and do a bit of research themselves. And we’ve given the older Travellers an opportunity to get together and talk about the old times at our open days.”

### 4.3 Len Smith, creator of The Romany Experience, Paulton’s Park, Hampshire

Len Smith, creator of the Romany Experience and Gypsy activist with the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition.

“My name is Len Smith and I am an English Traveller originally from Yorkshire, although I’ve lived in the New Forest for the last 47 years. I’ve made my living for most of my working life as a carriage builder and obviously within that trade I did a few wagons, a bit of restoration and bit of building. Because I was doing that sort of thing I ended up getting involved with Paulton’s Park, the visitor attraction near Romsey who established a big Romani exhibition

**“It teaches... what the way of life was like in the past, and with a history it helps reinforce your identity.”**

and I got involved as an adviser.”

Why have you done this work – why has it been important to you?

“It’s been important to me because locally in the New Forest for instance Gypsies were accepted for hundreds of years and yet in more recent years had to endure a lot of discrimination. But more to the point, my grandparents were the ones who talked to me about Romani life and culture and trade practices and things like that.”

What obstacles have you encountered when you’ve been doing this work?

“Well luckily I didn’t encounter any obstacles with this particular project because they came to me in a sense and asked me to do it. So any possible obstacles were removed by that. But I did obviously find some obstacles in matters of detail because the particular orientation of the exhibit that I’ve done is as a visitor attraction.

I found obstacles in the sense that I had to orientate it towards visitors rather than purely as a museum exhibit.”

So there were commercial considerations?

“Yes, to make it entertaining rather than merely to inform, which I would have preferred to do, but equally you’ve got to take what you can get and this at least has put a very large exhibit in front of a very large number of people.”

So were there censorship issues going on where you thought you couldn’t approach something because it’s going to put people off – it’s not going to be commercially attractive?

“Not really – never thought of it in that way but equally I suppose that did operate because we were choosing the things that were more commercially attractive – I didn’t reject anything on the basis that it wasn’t but equally chose the things that were more commercially attractive than otherwise.”

What do you feel that you’ve achieved?

“Well although in one sense there’s a disappointment in so far as this exhibit is all totally rooted in the past. But what it has achieved, is it teaches a lot of young traveller kids and the settled community about Gypsy and Traveller culture, what the way of life was like in the past, and with a history it helps reinforce your identity. Plus the huge numbers of people that go through this exhibit every year – running into hundreds of thousands. Then if you only change the perceptions of even

1% of those people it makes a very big impact."

What more would you like to do?

"In general I'd like to see something much more rooted in the here and now, the problems that gypsies and travellers are facing as well as the enjoyment of Gypsy and Traveller culture - I think you need to reflect the whole bracket of Gypsy life as it is in the here and now because I think British society is inherently racist largely because of ignorance. If you can remove that ignorance by the same stroke you remove some of the racism."

#### 4.4 Henry and Paula Elliott, Cranbrook

Henry and Paula Elliott's smallholding in Cranbrook, Kent exemplifies the Gypsy community's historical and ongoing place in the British countryside, part nursery, part home and potential museum it illustrates that in Gypsy culture there is no real division between work and home, or past and present.

"My name is Henry Elliot, also known as Stamford and my dad's family was always known as the Bacons, the Bacon boys and I am also known as Henry Bacon."

" I'm Paula Elliott also known as Stamford, Henry's wife, a non-Gypsy married into the Gypsy community and we've got a nursery and small holding and that's what we do."



Paula and Henry Elliott of the Twin Oaks Romany Museum in Cranbrook, Kent. Photo: Matt Cardy.

How are you personally involved in preserving Gypsy and Travellers history and culture?

"We're trying to set up a museum here which we will do eventually. We've got six wagons and other carts and different bits and pieces that Travellers and also non-Travellers would have used over the years."

"We've also got loads of other artefacts that Travellers and Gypsies would have used like all the old pots and the kettles and the kettle irons. We've got models of wagons and carts and china horses and all the things that travellers would have had and used over the years."

"We've got a lot of old bits of harness and bridles. Also we can talk to people about our way of life and what we used to have to do and what we still do have to do."

"So that is something that we want to do, we just keep our culture going and talk to people about it, invite anyone who wants to, to turn up here they're welcome to come, have a cup of tea, have a chat. If we're eating bread and cheese they can have bread and cheese, if we're eating a bit of steak they can have a bit of steak. It's as simple as that - what we've got, we share."

#### 4.5 Simon Evans

Simon Evans' work as an author radio journalist and photographer has drawn on the rich Gypsy heritage of Kent in much of his work.

Although a gorgia (non-Gypsy) he is widely accepted by the Gypsy community, particularly in Kent. He has recently brought years of research on Gypsy history together into a book called

**"We've got a lot of old bits of harness and bridles. Also we talk to people about our way of life and what we used to have to do and what we still do have to do."**

Stopping Places - A Gypsy History of South London and Kent. Some of his contemporary photographs are also used throughout this report.

How are you personally involved in preserving Gypsy and Traveller history and culture?

"Through my work mainly as a writer broadcaster and photographer. I'm a documentary photographer of contemporary Gypsy lifestyles - also a Gypsy historian so I have done a lot of work on Gypsy history in Kent and also I do a lot of radio work with the travellers around Gypsy culture."

Why have you done this work?

"I don't know it's just one of those things that you get latched into. I first got involved 20 years ago. Once you are involved you are involved and its gone from there. Also I recognise from my own family because half of my family come from the East End of London and I just see cultural connections between history culture and gypsy culture in the south east of England so it's been part of a wider working class culture of Kent and south east London. It all fits into that."

What obstacles have you encountered in this work?

"Obstacles usually arise from misunderstanding of what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. Or what it is exactly that I'm after. In terms of broadcasting or making radio programmes or taking photographs there are two obstacles. The first is travellers' reluctance to be involved but once they know me and what I do then that reluctance tends to dissipate."

"Also the obstacles are the people who may be commissioning programmes might also have misunderstandings about what the gypsy and romany culture is that I'm trying to put forward. For instance the commissioning editor at Radio 4 - we had an exchange of emails about doing Romani culture or Gypsy culture. He emailed me back and said that in his experience it was difficult to get folklore on radio 4. He thought Romani culture was just about the past and its folklore rather than contemporary culture that's here and now."

"As far as writing is concerned and the research in secondary sources such as museums and libraries the obstacles are that stuff is not necessarily categorised under romany studies or Gypsy studies because there isn't such a categorisation so you've got to know how to explore libraries and archives to find the information and that can present considerable difficulties because the bottom

line is you usually are having to wade through vast quantities of material, lots of indexes in order to locate stuff which may or may not be of use for what you are trying to do."

What do you feel you've achieved?

"It's one of those things really - I don't know. What I've physically achieved is a number of radio programmes and a book. What achievement that represents in cultural terms for Gypsy culture or Romani culture I wouldn't like to say - time will tell."

What more would you like to do?

"Well continue along that line really - I like to be doing more in terms of contemporary Romani Gypsy and Traveller culture as it exists mainly now in its sedentary form because historically of course the traveller culture has been dependent on nomadism. So the area I'm particularly interested in is what is the difference between a nomadic and sedentary cultures. There is friction between them and how does also a hitherto nomadic culture or transient culture then make that transition into a sedentary one. What may be lost or gained in the process but that's the area I'm increasingly interested in moving into apart from the historical side although that's the bedrock of all of it."

**"I'm particularly interested in is what is the difference between a nomadic and sedentary cultures. There is friction between them and how does also a hitherto nomadic culture or transient culture then make that transition into a sedentary one."**