

Gypsy, Romany and Traveller history in Surrey: a full bibliography of published sources

Despite first being mentioned in the historical record at least 500 years ago, references to Surrey's travelling peoples are often difficult to find. Surrey History Centre holds a range of archives, photographs, and published works which illustrate the fact and fiction surrounding this community over the centuries.

This bibliography comprises the full range of published works held at Surrey History Centre, from newspapers and illustrations of fairs to articles on bare knuckle boxing and The Derby. Details of all books and some articles can be found on the [Surrey Libraries Catalogue](#). Illustrations, newspaper and periodical articles can be searched for using the Archives Catalogue and [Exploring Surrey's Past](#) website.

Illustrations

Our holdings of photographs, postcards, prints and engravings are a good source of pictorial material relating to the history of travelling communities in the county.

Photographs taken for the Photographic Survey and Record of Surrey (SHC ref 7828) in the early part of the twentieth century include:

- Bletchingley Fair 1907, 1908 and 1909
- Haslemere Fair at Clay Hill, 1911
- Postcard albums (arranged by town) include images of:
 - Bletchingley Fair
 - Merstham Fair
 - Mitcham Fair
 - Gypsies at Cobham and Godstone
 - Rodney 'Gypsy' Smith's evangelist mission at Guildford, 1907
- Other illustrations include photographs and prints of:
 - Epsom Derby and Epsom Downs
 - A circus procession in Farnham
 - Travellers over the heath at Thursley
 - St Catherine's Fair, Artington
 - Castle Street Fair, Farnham
 - Reigate Fair, 1912

Newspapers

Local newspapers are a good source of material (albeit biased) regarding Romany and Traveller interactions with settled communities. They often carry reports of legal proceedings, reports of land disputes, evictions, reports of sporting events such as prize fights, as well as reports of markets and fairs.

- Surrey History Centre holds a number of local newspapers on microfilm including:
- Sussex Agricultural Express 1838-1903 (covers whole county)
- Surrey Advertiser 1864 to date (SW Surrey Guildford/Godalming area)
- Surrey Comet 1854-1981 (Kingston area)

The British Newspapers collection, 1710-1953, is available on the Find My Past website for individual subscribers (also available free in all Surrey Libraries and Surrey History Centre).

Periodicals

- Romany Routes; journal of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society
- Platform - Fairground Society
- Fairground Heritage News – Friends of the Fairground Heritage Trust

More general family history publications have occasional articles of interest to researchers into Romany and Traveller heritage:

- Ancestors – National Archive
- Practical Family History – Armstrong, Boon and Marriot
- Root and Branch – West Surrey Family History Society

Books

Many articles are published in local history society magazines which can be searched on our periodicals database using [Exploring Surrey's Past](#) website. 'Romany Routes' the journal of the RTFHS is a good place to start and Surrey History centre holds a good run of this title.

General sources, family history and research guides

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Communities

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Fairs

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Updated December 2020