

# Eltham Green Sports College Parents' Bulletin



No. 30      Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010



**Dear Parent / Carer**

**School Calendar: week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

<b>Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 8 Science/Geography Coast trip</li> <li>• Year 11 maths exam</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head teacher's surgery – 3.30 – 6.00 pm</li> <li>• Year 7 camp information evening – 6 - 6.30 pm in the library</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 8 Science/Geography Coast trip</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June</b>	
<b>Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June</b>	

7 members of Eltham Green staff are riding the London to Brighton Charity Bike Ride on Sunday June 20<sup>th</sup>. We would like to raise money in memory of Gabriel Rotimi and Nathan Logue.

The money raised will go towards their memorial, garden and plaques, and any other clubs set up in memory of them, any other funds will be used by FOEG to this purpose.

We will also be selling 'doves of peace' badges in the first week back after half term. This will raise money and our students can overtly show their support after the sad loss to the boys' families and our school community.

If you would like to donate, please do to the school office, student volunteers or the cyclists (who will be doing it in fancy dress) around the school: Matt Boucher, Scott Slater, Rachel Turgut (on a tandem with) Emily Boxer, Kirsty O'Sullivan and Marilyn Smith (the scientists) and Rob Wallace (The Aussie on a bike).

Thanks for your support, Matt Boucher, Head of MFL.



Throughout the month of June many people from all walks of life will come together for the third annual Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) to celebrate the history, culture and rich heritage of all Travellers.

The histories and cultures of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities offer rich and fascinating opportunities for extending the learning of all children and young people.

Aiming to raise awareness of GRT communities and celebrate their culture and history, you can include some activities in your lesson planning or registration time.

Please find a wordsearch activity and some myths and the truth about the Gypsy Roma Traveller, and their history and culture that you might want to use.

Thanks

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### ***Gypsy and Traveller Culture and History***

***--some myths and the truth--***

***GRTHM through workshops, exhibitions and shows hopes to dispell some of the myths***

**Myth:** Gypsies are foreign.

Much media coverage talks of Gypsies and Travellers "invading" places. Invasion is a military term used about armies. How can it be used about a community that has been a part of British society for centuries?

**Truth:** Gypsies and Travellers have been part of British society for over 500 years.



**Myth:** All Gypsies live in caravans

**Truth:** Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised ethnic minorities with their own culture, language and beliefs. Yet planning law defines Gypsies simply as people with a nomadic way of life. While this is historically true. 90% of Gypsies across the world now live in houses. Being nomadic is more common in Western Europe. But even here only 50% of Gypsies live in caravans. Gypsies also live in houses but they take their culture indoors with them.

**Myth:** Gypsies are endowed with special supernatural powers, including the ability to curse and see the future.

**Truth:** Some Gypsies may well have psychic powers, but no more than anyone else. But some myths can be turned to a community's advantage. A nation without an army is forced to defend itself with curses and superstition. Some Gypsies have turned the myths about them on their head and earned living telling fortunes. Gypsy and Traveller fortune tellers have cultivated the mystery that has always surrounded Gypsy culture.

**Myth:** Gypsies are dirty.

**Truth:** Gypsy culture is built upon strict codes of cleanliness learnt over centuries of life on the road. Concepts such as mokadi and mahrima place strict guidelines, for example, on what objects can be washed in what bowls. Gypsies view gorgias (non-Gypsies) as unclean because of the way they live.

For example, Gypsies and Travellers rarely let animals inside their homes, because they believe them to be carriers of disease.



### History and Culture

Gypsies and Travellers have developed their own traditions in music, story-telling, poetry, art and design, and dance.

Their influence on artistic achievements in all these has been immense. They have helped forge such unique artistic expressions such as the art of flamenco in Southern Spain and sustain it today with their unique contribution - most of the leading exponents are Gypsy or are heavily influenced by them. And this is just one example.

Gypsies suffered brutally in the hands of the Nazis. **The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust** remembers all of the victims of Nazi racial and social policy including the Roma & Sinti who along with the Jews were targeted for extinction.

The Travelling community has always included some of the most talented musicians of any period. Most people have heard of the great guitarist Django Reinhardt, a Belgian Sinto Gypsy and one of Europe's first great Jazz musicians. In the present day Le Taraf de Haïdouks, Fanfare Ciocaria and Hungarian Gypsy Orchestra are among the most popular orchestral performers in the world. The critically-acclaimed rock band Gogol Bordello and their frontman Eugene Hütz are fusing traditional Gypsy music with new forms for a wider audience to promote Romani rights.

In the past, many classical composers such as Debussy and Liszt were inspired by traditional Gypsy music. Now youth from the Travelling communities are starting to express their heritage through new musical forms: in the UK, artists such as Tommy Pearce and Jamal Jimenez are part of a growing Gypsy Rap movement which is taking GRT music in new directions.

### **Irish Travellers have been in mainland Britain for centuries.**

Irish Travellers have been living here more than 500 years ago. Irish Travellers refer to themselves as 'Pavees' or 'the Pavee' and they are sometimes known by the Irish name of 'Minceir'.



An image of Irish Travellers on the move. This is one image from a fine photographic collection on Gypsies, held at the Liverpool University Library. Irish Travellers are a recognised ethnic minority with their own language, called Shelta. This is spoken in different dialects including Gammon/Gamin and Cant. Tradition is very important to Irish Travellers. Customs such as cleanliness and hygiene, music and singing, horsemanship, the family, respect and care for elders in the community are at the heart of Irish Traveller culture. Being free to travel is an idea that is still very important even for Travellers who live in houses. Through the years Irish Travellers have had diverse dealings with Romany Gypsies and both peoples attend important fairs together, such as Appleby Fair in Cumbria in June. There have also been many marriages between English and Irish Travellers. Their histories are distinct though and this is a source of pride for both communities. Funereal customs are also different, but the need to show proper honor and respect to the dead is held in common.



## Our Sikh Trip

On Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> May year 7 SHL and two other year 7 classes, 7TLE and 7NBA went on a trip to the Southall Gurdwara. It is the biggest in our country. When we arrived we had to cover our head with scarves and the boys had to cover their heads with a yellow scarf. Then we had to take our shoes off and wash our hands.

First we were taken to a quiet room which had a Sikh throne with a book in the middle of it. The book wasn't an ordinary book it was a book which had writing in it which means a lot to Sikhs. In the room we asked many questions and got many answers. We asked about Sikh boys and girls getting Singh and Kaur at the end of their names. Kaur goes at the end of a Sikh girl which means 'princess' and Singh goes at the end of a Sikh boy which means lion.

Next we went to a praying room. When we went into the room we had to kiss the carpet (it wasn't actually kissing the carpet but it looked like it) this was in front of the Guru Granth Sahib. After that we sat down (girls on the left and boys on the right) we listened to the music/prayer that the Sikh men on the stage were singing. After that we went to an art gallery where we learned more about why the Sikh Gods got tortured and how they got tortured... it wasn't very nice.

Finally we went into the Langar. At first everyone was very worried about the food. Everyone was thinking it would be disgusting but as soon as everyone went into the Langar (which is the food hall) everyone was like "this food smells really nice". My friend Emily had this green sauce thing and this other sauce with potatoes in it. I didn't really want to try the green one but everyone said that the sauce with the potatoes in it was really nice so I went up for seconds and got two portions of rice and one portion of sauce. The rice wasn't actually rice it was our pudding but it tasted like rice, it was very sweet.

At the end I learned that if there is a Sikh in the room/place you're safe because if anything happens they are always there to defend. We also learned that the book is always covered unless it is being read from and it never gets touched with hands. They have to wear gloves.

*What do the Sikhs believe in?* Our tour guide told us that Sikhs believe that there is only one god, everyone is equal, meditation, never lie and to share with others.



This is where we had to bow down and put our heads on the carpet



This is the important Book



This is the place of worship