

# Cultural and Social History

## The Journal of the Social History Society

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfcs20>

# What field? Where? Bringing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history into view

Becky Taylor & Jim Hinks

To cite this article: Becky Taylor & Jim Hinks (2021): What field? Where? Bringing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history into view, Cultural and Social History, DOI: [10.1080/14780038.2021.1960552](https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2021.1960552)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2021.1960552>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 01 Aug 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## What field? Where? Bringing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history into view

Becky Taylor and Jim Hinks

School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

### ABSTRACT

This historiographical article aims to do three things. First, to construct a working overview of historical and aligned scholarship focussed on the history of Britain's Gypsy and Traveller populations, to give non-specialists an understanding of the key pieces of scholarship and debates within the field. Second, to argue that it is not sufficient for these histories to remain only a concern of 'Romani' scholars, and so exist largely separate from both mainstream histories and histories of Britain's other minority populations. And third, to offer some thoughts on possible avenues for future research and the potential for more joined-up scholarship.



### KEYWORDS

Gypsy Roma Traveller; historiography; Roma Holocaust; New Travellers; stereotypes

Most people, if asked to give an account of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) history as a field, might be forgiven for asking, 'what field?' Unlike the massive surge of interest, and the intellectual and empirical steps forward that have been taken, in the histories of Britain's wider Black, Asian and minority ethnic populations in recent decades, Gypsy and Traveller history remains something of a backwater, seemingly cut off from this same flow of historical attention. In this article, as much as sketching out the key contributions to the historiography, we aim to make the case that it is no longer tenable to treat their histories as something that can be ignored, left to 'Romani' specialists, or viewed as an optional extra. Rather, we argue, paying attention to the history of one of Britain's longest-established minority groups is both important in and of itself, and should be taken as an intrinsic part of the wider project to expand and diversify internal British histories that has gained so much momentum since the publication of the Royal Historical Society's 2018 race and ethnicity report.<sup>1</sup>

We will begin by tackling head on the endemic prejudice Gypsy, Roma and Traveller populations both faced historically and crucially also continue to face today. To say that prejudice against these groups remains the last acceptable expression of racism would be to ignore the extent to which racist attitudes and behaviours more generally remain embedded across British society and its institutions.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, active and overt vilification of Gypsies and Travellers remains routine across institutional, public and everyday settings, while those challenging this invective remain largely confined to GRT organisations and their immediate supporters. What historically was uncritically referred

---

**CONTACT** Becky Taylor  [b.taylor@uea.ac.uk](mailto:b.taylor@uea.ac.uk)  School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich Research Park, NR4 7TJ UK

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.  
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

to as ‘the Gypsy problem’ by the twenty-first century had morphed into virulent attacks on Gypsy and Traveller communities by the British right-wing media and politicians and large sections of the public. These were perhaps most visible in *The Sun*’s ‘Stamp on the Camps’ campaign before the 2005 election, but were also embedded across the spectrum of public and political life, from the insidious mis-representations of Irish Traveller culture in Channel 4’s *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* series (2011–15) to the government’s ongoing legislative attempts to criminalise nomadism.<sup>3</sup>

The demonisation of a particular section of British society has often been justified via references to Gypsies’ and Travellers’ failure to conform to particular, often highly romanticised, stereotypes centring on a narrow range of ethnic and cultural markers, with anti-Gypsy or Traveller comments commonly prefaced by statements ‘I don’t mind the *real* Gypsies, it’s the [pejorative anti-Gypsy slur] I don’t like’:

When I was growing up, we used to have what they called a horse fair in the village. Travellers and Gypsies from all over the country came, and they were fine. They used to bring a fair with them and we had a great time, but, I think I’m a little bit intolerant of travellers now because they’ve changed over the years. *Woman, mid-50s, West Midlands*<sup>4</sup>

This is an attitude which insists on positioning Gypsies and Travellers in an idealised historical past – one of bow-topped caravans, horses and fairs – when their presence was ‘fine’, and simultaneously, through denying them the possibility of change over time, placing them outside of history. And in a society where written histories and a publicly acknowledged heritage goes hand-in-hand with wider social acceptance, to be marginalised from the historical record is to be denied not only historical agency but the very right to claim a history. Although there have been baby steps towards making visible Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories – through commemorations on Holocaust Day, the establishment of Gypsy Roma Traveller History month in June, and in the small trickle of teaching and other resources –<sup>5</sup> without sustained and significant engagement by research historians, who traditionally produce the material on which more publicly orientated histories are based, these largely remain marginalised activities. This article then aims not to offer an exhaustive account of all work relevant to Gypsy and Traveller history, but instead seeks to act partly as a summary of key work to date, and through pointing to avenues of future research, to shift attention among academic historians towards Gypsy and Traveller history. While there is an expanding scholarship – although primarily social science focussed – on Irish Travellers within Ireland, historical work on their distinctive experiences remains very limited.<sup>6</sup> Even so, because of their long-established pattern of migration between Ireland and the United Kingdom, a position intensified after the Irish government accepted the recommendations of the 1963 Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, where appropriate we also include work covering Irish Travellers.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, although the focus of this essay is on Britain, because of the importance of European scholarship to British historiographical developments, and because the Roma who now live in Britain bring with them the legacy of their European histories, we also cover some of the key work stemming from mainland Europe.

This article begins by setting out the background to and emergence of academic histories of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. We locate this both within a longer history of ethnography and anthropology and within the rise of activist/rights-orientated

scholarship and a growing interest in minority histories from the late 1960s. We then move on to discuss the key historical works dealing with Gypsies and Travellers in the modern and early modern periods in Britain and across Europe, including their intersection with the growing field of Atlantic studies and the contributions of local and non-academic historians to the scholarship. The next section sketches out the expansion of Roma scholarship that specifically grapples with the experiences of Roma and Sinti during and after the Second World War and under state socialism. In the subsequent section, our attention turns to the methodological challenges involved in researching the history of a population that not only was largely non-literate until relatively recently but also routinely described and treated as a deviant underclass, and the ways in which historians have sought to navigate these issues. In the final substantive section we distil some of the theoretical approaches that have been used, primarily by social scientists, in researching the contemporary position of Gypsies and Travellers in British society, to reflect if and how historians might profitably take on any of these insights in their own work. Building on this, in the article's conclusion, we suggest some possible routes forward for the field.

Before we go any further it is worth clarifying the labels used to describe Britain's hereditary nomadic populations. To summarise a complex debate, in essence those who trace their lineage to the migrations stemming from north-western India in the early medieval period are termed Roma in mainland Europe and Romany/Romani or Gypsy in England and Wales.<sup>8</sup> Scots and Irish Travellers claim a different, indigenous, heritage, one often explicitly, although by no means exclusively, tied to experiences of dispossession as a result of English colonial practices.<sup>9</sup> By contrast most Roma who are now in the UK arrived after 1989, in moves which were prompted variously by the collapse of state socialism across the Eastern bloc, the break-up of Yugoslavia, the rise of Romaphobia across the region, and the formal expansion of the EU in the early twenty-first century.

In policy, advocacy and official public circles, the phrase 'Gypsies and Travellers' has become the normal way to describe Britain's hereditary and traditionally nomadic populations, while GRT (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) – or increasingly GRTSB (Gypsy Roma Traveller Showperson Boater) –<sup>10</sup> now acts as the catch-all acronym to describe persons with either nomadic or Roma heritage. While collapsing these very different groups into one category for policy purposes may have merit in terms of raising the visibility of these populations, we would argue that historians are working on rather different terrain. Our sources typically speak of 'Egyptians' for the early modern period, and often 'gipsies' (with many variant spellings) up until the late twentieth century. Searches in archives and files can also throw up material under the labels van-dweller, tent-dweller, tinker, fortune teller, showman or vagrant. Occasionally we have 'persons calling themselves Egyptian/gipsy', but most normally we are left with the categorisation decided on by the, commonly hostile, writer.

Consequently, while it is normal for historians to use 'Gypsies and Travellers' or GRT, when discussing the present day, most have settled for Gypsy as the most appropriate term in historical contexts unless they are very specifically discussing, or including, Scots and Irish Travellers.

\*\*\*

Most accounts of the history of Romani-focussed scholarship date from the publication of Enlightenment-scholar Heinrich Grellmann's 1787 *Dissertation on the Gypsies*,

that definitively located European Roma as a diaspora originating in north-western India.<sup>11</sup> Its mix of starkly racialising imaginary and serious linguistic study chimed with the times and became the foundation text for subsequent research, and amateur gentleman scholars of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century followed his lead. These ‘gypsiologists’ were commonly motivated by a desire to preserve the last remnants of a ‘pure’ Gypsy culture and language in the face of their presumed inexorable decline in the face of modernity, often publishing their findings in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*.<sup>12</sup> In the absence of other scholarships focussed on Gypsies their grounding assumptions and their work cast a long shadow on academic discourse.

Here, it is useful to distinguish between the idealising and nostalgic emphasis of the Gypsy Lore Society and the search for the ‘pure’ Gypsy that seemed to drive many of its affiliates, and the serious scholarship that some lorists produced and published in the *Journal*. Its back catalogue is consequently rich in meticulous linguistic and ethnographic research, and this work was continued after the journal was reinvented in 2000 as *Romani Studies*. Notable here has been the work of one of its first editors, Yaron Matras, who has perhaps done more than any other modern linguist to take seriously both Romani as a language, and to think through the relationship between it as a language and its continued social and cultural presence in modern Europe.<sup>13</sup>

Beyond the bounds of the Gypsy Lore Society, we need to wait until the late twentieth century to mark the beginning of the serious study of GRT histories in Britain. Here we can point to the publication of two key works in the early 1970s: Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon’s *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies* (1972), and Thomas Acton’s *Gypsy Politics and Social Change* (1974).<sup>14</sup> These two works were significant for a number of reasons. Kenrick and Puxon’s book, which built on research they had carried out and a report they had published in 1968, sought for the first time to document and make visible the multiple experiences of extermination of European Roma and Sinti under Nazi and Nazi-influenced regimes, in what came to be termed the *Porrajmos* (‘the devouring’) in Romani.<sup>15</sup> Acton’s book by contrast focussed on the UK and sought to place the emergence of the Gypsy Council and the activism of the 1960s within a longer history of ‘Gypsy-Gaujo relations’.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to the underpinning assumptions of the Gypsy Lore Society, the works of Puxon and Kenrick, and Acton took seriously the enduring presence of GRT in modern Europe, and sought to reveal the connection between the systematic persecution and everyday racism they experienced and their position in European societies across time. Theirs were by no means neutral histories, but ones constructed from passion, anger and urgency that as much sought to change the world they were living in as to document the past from which it has sprung.

Although their work was unprecedented, it is no surprise that this was the approach they took, coming as they all did in their different ways, from highly politicised backgrounds. Puxon had resisted evictions of Travellers in Ireland, before becoming central to the formation of the Gypsy Council in the UK in 1966; Donald Kenrick, was a linguist as well as an activist and succeeded Puxon as secretary of the Gypsy Council in 1971; and Thomas Acton’s route in Gypsy Traveller activism began with his work with the first Gypsy Council caravan school in 1967 while a student at Oxford, with his experiences informing the fieldwork for his doctorate on contemporary Romani politics.<sup>17</sup> We can usefully see their intellectual, political and personal trajectories as both specific to their interactions with GRTs in a particular historical moment, and as occurring within the

wider background of mid- and late 1960s (student) activism and the interconnected Black Power, anti-racist and Third World liberationist movements. Indeed, we might characterise them similarly as emerging from a Roma/Gypsy Power movement. And we can certainly set Puxon and Kenrick's attempt to reveal the atrocities perpetrated against Roma and Sinti during the Second World War alongside the work of the new generation of German historians seeking to reveal the full extent of their parents' generation's complicity in the Holocaust.

It is significant that although *Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* and Acton's book engaged with history and historical sources, these were not the work of academic historians, and the passion and the politics that underpinned their genesis became directed, not primarily into historical research, but rather into what became the new academic field of Romani studies. Often, although never completely, associated with action-orientated research, this interdisciplinary field aims to make visible the processes underpinning the systematic and ongoing exclusion of Roma from majority European societies and the harms this brings. It also seeks to foreground the long heritage, strength and existence of Romani language, culture and society.<sup>18</sup> Those producing historical work in the field of Romani studies broadly speaking sought to reveal the exceptional nature of GRT historical and contemporary experiences of marginalisation and persecution, and by extension used their insights as part of a broader political argument to garner much-needed resources for these populations across Europe. In reflecting more broadly on the rise of Romani studies, historian David Mayall has described it as a field of scholarship 'motivated by a pro-Gypsy political purpose which argued for the need of affirmative action backed by affirmative research', and one that has on occasion been riven by tensions and divisions.<sup>19</sup> While, as he goes on to elaborate, this had most impact in the fields of sociology, social policy and other disciplines directly feeding into contemporary policy debates and funding streams, history, as we shall see, has not remained exempt from this tension.

Important though this strand of scholarship has been in pushing GRT histories towards visibility, it was not the only source from which historical study sprang. Since the 1980s there has emerged a second thread, one which often sought to understand the place of Britain's Gypsies and Travellers and Europe's Roma from a different perspective, locating their experiences within bigger historical pictures of migration, minorities and 'race' in Europe and globally. In doing so, they have attempted to tie their scholarship to emerging early modern and modern historiographies in these fields, and in the process have sought to explore connections between Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and other marginalised and minority groups and their relationships with European states, societies, and populations.

It is no coincidence that the first scholarly and detailed history of Britain's Gypsy and Travellers – David Mayall's *Gypsy-Travellers in Nineteenth Century Society* – came out of Sheffield University and from under the supervision of Colin Holmes.<sup>20</sup> Holmes, with Keith Lunn, had founded the journal *Immigrants & Minorities* in 1981. This journal, and what we can think of as the Sheffield school's approach to the historical study of migration and prejudice, was centrally concerned with making connections, not only between the experiences of different minority and migrant populations but between them and historical developments in wider society.<sup>21</sup> As much as the working classes needed rescuing, in E. P. Thompson's words, from 'the enormous condescension of posterity', so

too did Britain's minority, including Gypsy Traveller, populations.<sup>22</sup> And so, the second half of the title of Mayall's book, signalling as it did the need to pay attention to society as much as to Gypsies and Travellers, was important. Although seeing them largely separate from some of the key features of the century, notably industrialisation and waged-labour, Mayall nevertheless placed their experiences within, and saw them as further illuminating other, central historical trends of the period. These included the central place of religion and missionary activity in nineteenth-century Britain as much as the expansion of the state, and changing leisure and cultural norms. Becky Taylor's work for the twentieth century took up this approach, extending Mayall's focus on the expansion of the state to include the differential impact of universal education and the construction of the welfare state on Britain's Gypsies and Travellers, as well as paying attention to how key events – the First and Second World Wars – and trends – motorisation, urbanisation and the arrival of significant numbers of Irish Travellers from the early 1960s – profoundly shaped their lives up to the present.<sup>23</sup> In doing so, her work has insisted that histories of Gypsies and Travellers, and of European Roma, must be understood as being intrinsically embedded in wider national histories, although always being refracted through their particular experiences.<sup>24</sup>

Together the work of Mayall and Taylor, spanning as they do the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, remain the key general histories for the modern period; however, other historians have focussed on particular dynamics in more depth. Both Mayall and Taylor sought to reveal the importance of stereotypes – apparently benign as well as overtly hostile – in mediating Gypsies and Travellers relationships with, and treatment by, wider society and the state across the last two centuries, but this only ever formed one strand of their wider attempts to construct their historical accounts. For Frances Timbers for the early modern period, and Jodie Matthews, Deborah Nord and Sarah Houghton-Walker for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Mary Burke for Irish Travellers, representation – textual and visual – has been a key route into exploring Gypsies' and Travellers' relationships with British society.<sup>25</sup>

Parallel to the work going on in Britain, but closely aligned in approach, we find the important interventions of Wim Willems, Leo Lucassen and Annemarie Cottaar, working out of Leiden University and sometimes collectively referred to as the 'Dutch School'. Their intellectual position was signalled in the title of their 1998 book *Gypsies and other Itinerant Groups*, with its insistence on shifting the focus away from racialised understandings of the experiences of Europe's Roma and other nomadic populations. Instead, they argued, historians needed to move towards an intellectual approach which foregrounded GRT experiences as *migrants*, alongside the experience of other mobile groups.<sup>26</sup> Stimulated by their wider research and expertise in international labour and other migrations, the Dutch School saw how mobile workers across Europe in the early modern and modern periods had been routinely discriminated against by states, trades and through everyday practice, and consequently sought to set Roma and other hereditary nomads firmly within that legislative and societal context. However, the Dutch School found their approach quickly and vigorously challenged by Romani studies scholars, who saw this as a post-modern deconstruction of the very real ethnic identity and separate experiences of Europe's Roma and other hereditary nomadic groups as a heresy.<sup>27</sup> At stake here, of course, was something larger than abstruse historical argument: as we show below, in the context of Roma and Sinti still fighting to have



their wartime experiences acknowledged as a racially motivated genocide, and where EU and national funding streams often privileged identifiable ethnic groups, holding firm to claims of a clear-cut ethnic identity and an attendant history of state-propagated persecution and marginalisation had real-world implications.

Less contentious, at least to date, have been historiographical developments for the early modern period. Often here, when historians have taken a comparative approach, it has been to set ‘Gypsies’ experiences alongside those of other ‘aliens’.<sup>28</sup> Maria Boes, for example, has usefully demonstrated how growing restrictions aimed at Europe’s Gypsy populations needs to be understood as marching hand-in-hand with a more general shift towards the tightening of state and municipal boundaries against all non-elite outsiders, observing that the German word for border, *Grenze*, did not come into common usage before the sixteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Richard Pym’s study of Gypsies in early modern Spain, a history which included the near-genocidal ‘round-up’ of 1749, likewise places the harsh treatment handed out to *Gitanes* within a wider context, in this case Spain’s ongoing experience of crisis and decline from the early seventeenth century.<sup>30</sup>

Social historian David Cressy’s major contribution, via his 2018 book *Gypsies. An English History*, is in his detailed engagement with the archives of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>31</sup> He is interested in firmly locating the reception, treatment and experiences of Gypsies within the wider concerns of early modern society (and its historians), and in the process not only covers obvious themes such as law and administration, prejudice, and crime and justice, but also neighbourliness, mobility, communications, popular culture and gender. As Tabitha Stanmore has recently argued in her piece on service magic, this approach usefully allows historians to move away from exoticised representations of Gypsies as fortune tellers, seeing it, and by extension them, instead as an everyday part of early modern life.<sup>32</sup> Cressy’s deep familiarity with the archives of this period enable him to successfully construct a ‘populated history’ containing named individuals as well as discussions of the ‘figure of “the Gypsy”’.<sup>33</sup> Although as his title suggests, his focus is very much on English Gypsies, the range of sources he deploys indicates that for historians interested in extending his work to other parts of the British Isles or Europe, early modern archives offer rich, and largely unexplored, avenues of study. And indeed, where detailed work has been done, more often focussing on continental Europe than the British Isles, it has paid dividends. David Abulafia, for example, has suggested that the use by Gypsy groups when they first arrived in Western Europe, of titles such as ‘count’ or ‘duke’ to name their leaders aimed to make themselves legible to the authorities receiving them, reflected back at European society its own power structures while rendering Gypsies’ own internal organisation opaque.<sup>34</sup>

One strand of research demonstrating the ways in which histories of Europe’s Gypsies were embedded in the emergence of early modern state practice has been via studies of the Atlantic world and the exercise of judicial transportation. For weak early modern states, transportation seemed to offer a solution to the problem of managing criminal populations while also providing labour and bodies to populate their emerging colonies. However, as Bill Donovan has long shown for Portugal’s transportation of Gypsies to Brazil, the state’s inability to control transportees after arrival saw deported Gypsies largely able to continue their itinerant lifestyle, trading not only in goods but also becoming embedded within the colony’s internal slave trade.<sup>35</sup> Ann Ostendorf has similarly explored how transported Gypsies to English colonies in North America and



French Louisiana both became entangled with, and further complicated, their emerging racialised societies.<sup>36</sup> These studies, with their use of passenger lists and other sources, point the way to thinking about the place of Gypsy populations in the Atlantic world. And, given the place of Balkan Roma in the great European migration to the Americas of the second half of the nineteenth century, suggest methods that might prove fruitful in extending this research into the modern period.

Important though these developments in academic history have been, as in any field of historical study, academic historians do not carry the full weight of sustained research, and the work of local historians and non-academic historians has an important part of play in the advancement of our knowledge. Here we can single out Andrew Connell's account of the genesis of Appleby Fair as an example of what can be done with a detailed and careful use of local sources. His work charts the fair from its time as a drovers' gathering to one of the iconic events in the British Gypsy Traveller calendar, and in the process reveals Gypsies' dynamic and complex relationship with the history of the town.<sup>37</sup> Springing from a different motivation, but nevertheless similarly based on the painstaking use of archival sources has been the work of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society.<sup>38</sup> This was founded by people keen to uncover their heritage among Britain's Gypsy and Traveller populations, but now carries resources that move beyond genealogy to include research advice, reprints of classic books on Gypsies as well as histories and biographies of Britain's hereditary nomads.

Robert Dawson's efforts have been of another order entirely. He has spent the last 50 years collecting and now making freely available, photos and other visual material relating to Europe's GRT populations, as well as donating a significant number to the National Holocaust Centre and Museum.<sup>39</sup> Together, his collection of photographs and reproductions of ephemera offer an unprecedented view of how GRTs have been represented and treated by majority European societies, but also, through family photographs and reproductions of letters, they also give us access to a far more intimate picture of their lives.

\*\*\*

We now turn to the growing historiography of Roma history across mainland Europe, focussing primarily on their experiences during the Second World War and its aftermath. The usefulness for those studying and writing history from a British perspective is twofold. First, Holocaust memorial day has become a standard part of the British memorial calendar and so the extent to which Roma are included in, or excluded from public memorialisations, speaks both to the historiographical tensions within the discipline as well as to the ongoing Romaphobia present in European, and British, society. Second, with roughly 200,000 European Roma now living in the UK, many still first-generation migrants, the European historiography sheds light on a past that directly speaks to their personal, familial and community histories.<sup>40</sup>

Immediately after the war, the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* carried two short pieces, written by Vanya Kochanowski and Matéo Maximoff, respectively – both survivors of the Nazi slave labour and camp regimes – exposing some of the experiences of Roma under Nazism.<sup>41</sup> However, as we have seen, it took over two decades for Kenrick and Puxon's overview of the Roma Holocaust to be published, with their account seeking to make explicit just how widespread and systematic the programme of anti-Roma

violence was, and to attempt to set this history persecution and extermination within a longer historical context.

Despite their efforts, it really took until the last years of the century for historians to really start to get to grips with the Roma Holocaust as a distinct phenomenon.<sup>42</sup> Much of the early work on the Roma Holocaust emerged from Germany. Here Michael Zimmerman's scholarship – and his position both as founding member of the Fritz Bauer Institute's Sinti and Roma working group and as co-editor of *Romani Studies* – was central to developing the historical evidence and framework to articulate the case for a racially motivated mass murder, that is genocide, of the Roma.<sup>43</sup> The process of extending scholarship in this field has often been as much about finding the appropriate terminology to describe Roma experiences during the war, as it has been a project of charting the extent and nature of those experiences. Language has remained highly contested. In particular, the issue of whether we can use the term genocide, as legally defined, as Zimmermann did, or the descriptor Holocaust in relation to the policies of the Nazi regime and its allies towards Roma and Sinti, or something else. Underpinning this has often been the issue of equivalence: can we compare Nazi attempts to exterminate the Roma to their treatment of the Jews? And can we deploy the same conceptual, linguistic, legal and experiential terms to describe and understand the experiences of Roma as scholars have developed to describe those of the Jews?<sup>44</sup> Here Anton Weiss Wendt's edited volume *The Nazi Genocide of the Roma*, as well as drawing together a new generation of scholars exploring the fate of Roma and allied groups outside of Greater Germany – France, Austria, the southern front, the Eastern Front and Axis allies including Romania – offers a good historiographical overview of the current debates surrounding these fraught questions.<sup>45</sup>

A distinct area of scholarship has emerged around the fight German Sinti and wider Roma populations have had in gaining compensation for their experiences during the war. This has often been aligned with the broader struggle to find recognition for the Roma Holocaust in public commemorations. Here Gilad Margalit's work led the way.<sup>46</sup> Julia von dem Knesebeck's (2011) book on the Roma struggle for compensation in post-war Germany comprehensively established how their eventual (limited) success was built on their fight to reject the explicit Nazi 'asocial' label that was also implicit within post-war German governments' attitudes towards its surviving Roma and Sinti populations. It was only by establishing themselves in the eyes of the state as an ethnic minority that they were able to expose the racialised thinking underpinning their 'asocial' designation during the war.<sup>47</sup> Accompanying the political work of securing recognition and financial compensation has been the broader project of securing public understanding of the Roma Holocaust, a process that in the last three decades has been one expression of a more general rise in the academic fields of public history, memory and commemoration. Here historians have sought to set the experience of Roma within the larger context of other disputed or denied events while also seeking to expose the specificity of the Roma experience.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the significant numbers of Roma displaced by war in the twentieth century – not only in the 1940s but also following the collapse of state socialism in eastern and south-eastern Europe in the 1990s – refugee history and Roma history have commonly operated as two distinct fields. However, Ari Joskowitz's work on Roma refugees in the late 1940s, shines a spotlight on Roma who were refugees under the auspices of the

International Refugee Organisation (IRO) at a time when 'Gypsy' was a privileged category that improved an applicant's chances of getting support.<sup>49</sup> This is rare example of an institution bucking the trend of sustained anti-Roma institutionalised prejudice, and also of the intellectual dividends that are paid by integrating Roma experiences with wider historical questions. We find similar fertile historical work emerging from those exploring the experience of Roma under different forms of state socialism and how this shifted through the different periods of its existence.<sup>50</sup>

\*\*\*

Underpinning much historical writing on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers lies the thorny question of methodology and sources. Within a western European context writing histories of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers sometimes appears to be almost uniquely challenging. Normally, the argument runs, given how until very recently their cultures have remained primarily oral and that the vast bulk of sources generated by the state and majority society have been almost universally hostile, it is difficult, almost impossible to write GRT history. Indeed, Jodie Matthews has claimed that historians 'run the risk of reproducing a vision of these cultures as silent (and thus spoken for), separate (and thus marginalised), and subaltern', and as a result suggests that many historians have decided that writing GRT history is simply too difficult a task.<sup>51</sup> While we do need to acknowledge the difficulties in researching their histories, this article has demonstrated the multiple ways in which historians have already gone some way to take up the challenge. Here it is perhaps useful to remind ourselves that neither lack of literacy nor negative state attention has prevented historians of other marginalised or stigmatised groups from constructing empathetic and finely grained histories from unlikely sources.<sup>52</sup> With these histories, as much as in Gypsy and Traveller history, this has involved historians thinking intelligently and creatively about what archives might potentially yield, and it has also been a case of historians thinking about those archives differently. Here, holding an awareness of 'the grain' of an archive, a technique that has been developed so fruitfully by post-colonial historians, is an obvious starting point.<sup>53</sup> For example, Jason Gibson and Helen Gardner's reinterpretation of nineteenth-century anthropologists' representation of Australia's Aboriginal population, might offer a potential way forward for historians interested in similarly revisiting the writings of Britain's Victorian 'gypsiologists'.<sup>54</sup>

In tandem with the careful counter-reading of state or externally generated sources, Becky Taylor has urged that we pay attention to the 'silence' as well as the 'noise' of the archives.<sup>55</sup> That is, she raises the importance of consciously working to counteract our natural tendency as historians to write about what we find in the archives, and to pause and ask ourselves whether a case represents something typical or might stand as an exception. So, for example, if we find one detailed file in Norfolk Record Office outlining complaints against Gypsies on Thetford's surrounding commons in 1890 but no other similar records from across the county for the whole of the nineteenth century, should we take that file's contents as emblematic of their relationship with landowners in this period?<sup>56</sup> Or how might we balance the existence of these 'problem' Gypsies on Barnham Cross Common against the countless – unarchived – cases when their presence went unremarked, or certainly undocumented? Or, looking broader, how might we as historians weigh the innumerable anti-Gypsy statutes passed from the late sixteenth century through to the mid-eighteenth century right across Europe – statutes that in essence outlawed the very state of 'being a Gypsy', making it something punishable by

mutilation, transportation or death – against the fact that right across the same period we see Roma, Romani and Traveller groups becoming embedded in each country across Western Europe, developing distinctive national and regional identities, cultural practices and variants of Romani language in the process? While archives do not necessarily lie, perhaps when researching GRT histories we need to pay more attention than normal to the ways in which they might distort the kind of histories we find offered up to us.

In response to the very obvious challenges presented by working with majority-generated archives, a number of historians have turned to oral history as a means of generating new evidence and constructing Traveller and Romani-centred histories. Although this trend has largely emerged in the last two decades, in fact we can trace its earliest iterations to the 1960s and the work of Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger in the last of their ground-breaking radio ballads, *The Travelling People* (1964). This hour-long radio programme used three-and-a-half months of recording material collected from across Scotland and England, to weave together in testimony and song an account of what it meant to be ‘a tenth-rate citizen in a civilised land’.<sup>57</sup> This was no flash in the pan for MacColl and Seeger. With their central position in the British folk revival and deep commitment to what we might think of as ‘music from below’, their efforts in uncovering and recording the music, songs and stories of fellow musicians were profound, as demonstrated in their relationship with the Stewarts, four generations of a family of Scots Travellers from Blairgowrie in Perthshire. They first met the Stewarts in the January of 1962, and what followed was a deep and sustained relationship running over 19 years, moving well beyond the initial scope of their radio recordings. This collaboration was unique for the period and remains exceptional, a meeting of musicians and storytellers on equal ground. It was one that avoided the romanticism and preconceptions of a fixed or dying Traveller identity, equally acknowledging the Stewarts’ time in the army, working as builders in Hatfield New Town or in sawmills as much as the family members’ vast repertoire of songs and stories and engagement in more ‘traditional’ activities like hawking and seasonal farm work.<sup>58</sup>

However, rather than spawning a new generation of oral historians – who might conceivably have been drawn from History Workshop or the broader ‘history from below’ movement<sup>59</sup> – we rather find absence until the end of the century and the first years of the twentieth century. Even then the focus of academic oral historians’ work has tended to be on European Roma, rather than British Gypsy and Traveller populations. Some of this work has sought to elicit testimony and memory of the second world war<sup>60</sup>; others have sought to use oral history in tandem with archival research to understand Roma cultural and family practices and traditions<sup>61</sup>; while others have seen oral history as a tool to move beyond outsiders’ labelling practices to explore how Roma themselves experience and articulate their identities.<sup>62</sup> Together, their work offers a useful insight into the range of historical questions that might be explored by seeing Roma as co-collaborators in the production of historical evidence. We should, however, be wary of assuming that oral history offers an unproblematic solution to the methodological challenges posed by researching the Roma. Indeed, Michael Zimmermann’s first engagement with Roma history was in 1985, as part of a University of Heidelberg oral history project examining the experience of persecution of German Sinti and Roma under National Socialism. Yet following objections of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma to the research, objections that it pursued through the courts, and where it

demanded the complete destruction of all materials gathered as part of the project, the project's findings were never published.<sup>63</sup> This may have been an extreme example, but it is revealing of the sometimes fraught nature of collecting testimony of experiences that carry deep personal, community and political scars. In turn, it urges us to think seriously of the ethical implications of embarking upon oral history research with a group whose claims on a national past as well as a national present remain deeply fragile and highly contested. But using oral histories as a way into exploring contentious and traumatic historical episodes is not the only way in which they can be used to co-produce historical accounts. Reflecting Kevin Myers' insight over the celebratory nature of many community history projects, far from revealing painful pasts, many more recent UK non-academic oral history projects have perhaps swung the other way: in seeking to affirm Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures, the depth and importance of family and locality ties, or the benefits of having migrated to the UK from ex-communist Europe, they have often skirted round more difficult questions.<sup>64</sup>

Focussing solely on oral history forgets another key source of GRT history stemming from the communities themselves: autobiographical testimony. While early examples of these disproportionately represented Gypsies and Travellers who were fully comfortable with literacy, from the 1980s we find joint ventures, where books were the outcome of extensive hours of interview and collaboration.<sup>65</sup> The earliest autobiography, Gordon Boswell's *Book of Boswell*, takes us from Blackpool's South Shore encampment and the nascent seaside leisure industry of the late nineteenth century to the trenches during the first world war to his final years as a scrap metal dealer in Lincolnshire.<sup>66</sup> Scots Traveller women are represented here by Betsy Whyte who grew up in the inter-war years, and Jess Smith, who was born in 1948. The distinctive experience of Irish Travellers living on both sides of the Irish border and in the mainland of the United Kingdom are represented particularly vividly in the testimony of Nan Joyce.<sup>67</sup> Together these publications, and a growing number of autobiographies and testimonies from Irish Travellers and English and Welsh Gypsies mean we have another path into charting the shift from horse-drawn to motorised nomadism, the growing reach of the state and regulation, and the different kinds of stigmatisation and their emotional impact on Gypsies and Travellers in late twentieth and early twenty-first century Britain.<sup>68</sup>

\*\*\*

Historians, of course, have not been the only academics interested in the relationship between Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, wider society and the state. From the 1970s sociologists, anthropologists and human geographers all started to extend their theoretical and empirical engagement not only with Gypsies and Travellers but also with ideas of space and 'race' and whiteness. While historians can often shy away from engaging with theory-heavy social science, here we suggest that some understanding of the key conceptual developments in these fields might offer fruitful theoretical grounding for historical research.

Anthropology was one of the first disciplines to start taking seriously the position of Gypsies and Travellers in modern society. In Ireland, anthropologists Sharon and George Gmelch sought to understand and set out the place of Travellers in modern Irish society.<sup>69</sup> Contemporaneous with their work in England Judith Okley's fieldwork and subsequent analysis revealed the perceived threat to settled communities from Gypsies and Travellers as being underpinned by ideological, rather than racial, difference. To

Okely, it was that Gypsies and Travellers 'refused to be proletarianised' and continued to 'defy the dominant system of wage labour and its demands for a fixed abode' that marked out their relationship with majority society.<sup>70</sup> Their cultural distinctiveness, with its twin features of mobility and self-employment, which Okley characterised as 'commercial nomadism', orientated social scientists away from a racial and declinist model that had dominated the work of the Gypsy Lore Society and others who made the assumption that Gypsies were bound to disappear with the arrival of modernity and urbanisation. By contrast Okley's work demonstrated that while the mode of transport and the range of occupations practised by Gypsy and Travellers had altered dramatically in the years after the Second World War, Gypsies and Travellers remained strongly wedded to the principles of self-employment and mobility, finding gaps in an ever-changing labour market that allowed them to preserve these defining characteristics.

Okley's work on commercial nomadism proved an important conceptual touchstone for social scientists interested in understanding Gypsies' and Travellers' relationship with the state and settled communities.<sup>71</sup> Sibley's *Outsiders in Urban Society* (1981), marked another important intellectual moment, in introducing ideas of space in relation to Gypsies and Travellers. Despite Gypsies and Travellers living and working in urban Britain from at least the nineteenth century, his research articulated, via a study of urban-based Gypsies and Travellers in Sheffield, the ways in which stereotypes of Gypsies and Travellers as inherently rural and nomadic persisted and worked against them. Although not drawing explicitly on Said's *Orientalism*, he argued how Western cultures have had a tendency to represent minority or marginal groups as outside culture, in the realm of the 'other', and closer to nature.<sup>72</sup> Combined with longstanding romanticised stereotypes of horse-drawn Gypsies as the 'real' Gypsies, these beliefs, he argued, served to position Gypsies and Travellers as having no place, either in urban Britain, or in modern society.

Taking these ideas further, Peter Kabachink has cast Gypsies and Travellers as 'place invaders', arguing how the arrival of nomadic individuals within an area defined by its permanent inhabitants as 'isolated, static and natural with fixed boundaries' unsettles their sense of space and place.<sup>73</sup> This sense of threat, he argues, is maintained by a discourse that casts nomadism as atavistic and fundamentally incompatible with a sedentary society, a discourse which is aided by local councils' and media's persistent recourse to the 'language of invasion'.<sup>74</sup> Defining who belongs to a space, and who is an outsider, in modern societies at least, necessarily raises the question of how a state positions itself between these competing sets of citizens (or alternatively between citizens on the one hand, and those it might consider intermittent, deviant or marginal citizens on the other). Picking up the idea of space, Zoe James's research has explored how police and local authorities, organised as they are on a territorial basis, are not neutral arbiters, but frequently seek to remove Gypsies and Travellers from 'their patch' via public order legislation, working 'in favour of the public who fear the risk of property of damage'.<sup>75</sup> This extends into the contemporary era historical observations Becky Taylor has made about the way that coercive welfare and education practices were used as much to move Gypsies and Travellers from an area as they were designed to forcibly assimilate them into the wider population.<sup>76</sup> For historians then, thinking about the changing meaning, control and use of space, the construction, working and policing of particular boundaries – physical and administrative – and not only in the modern period, all suggest ways



into understanding Gypsies and Travellers relationships with their environment, the wider population and government. It also offers a way into exploring their agency, as Gypsies and Travellers have long made strategic use of boundaries to evade control and claim particular spaces for their own.

As we raised in the introduction, there is a tendency to flatten out the distinctions between different groups who live nomadically – exemplified in the use of the acronym GRTSB – and what their arrival might signal in a particular place. For example, those who continue to be horse drawn – whether Gypsy, Traveller or New Traveller – are typically seen to pose less of a symbolic threat to the rural scene than arrivals of numbers of modern caravans and motorised transport. But focussing on the act of travelling fails to account for prejudice and discrimination against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers who reside in permanent caravan sites or a bricks and mortar home. This is important as many of Europe's Roma populations and two-thirds of British Gypsies and Travellers are now thought to be housed, with Smith and Greenfield's work on Gypsies living in council housing documenting the persistent prejudice and hostility meted out to Gypsies by their neighbours.<sup>77</sup>

This leads us to think about 'race' as well as 'space'. Gypsies and Irish and Scots Travellers are now recognised as ethnic groups and subject to protection under anti-discrimination legislation, and yet they persistently have difficulty in receiving the recognition and protection that this status in theory bestows on minorities. Royce Turner's analysis of *Hansard* reveals the willingness of parliamentarians to make anti-Gypsy comments. Significantly this leads him to claim that anti-Gypsy prejudice cannot be explained by recourse to racism alone as the ambiguities over who or who is not considered a Gypsy created a space in which highly bigoted comments could be made while side-stepping allegations of racism.<sup>78</sup> Colin Clark's work on the Roma in Scotland and the UK more generally shows both the endemic nature of Romaphobia – even in context of their recent arrival – and signals that we need to be wary of collapsing the different experiences of racism of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers.<sup>79</sup>

The not-fully-realised, indeed often denied, status as a minority also provides important way of exploring the history of Gypsies and Travellers. We have already suggested how the trope of the relatively benign 'full-blooded Gypsy, dressed in traditional costume and pursuing country crafts from their *vardo* is often set in opposition to their antithesis, the Traveller dressed in modern clothing, often traversing the country in a motor-hauled caravan and dealing in scrap metal or engaging in other 'anti-social' work. Sarah Holloway has explored how residents in the town of Appleby constructed the 'otherness' of the Gypsies and Travellers who visited the town for its annual horse fair. Along with using divisions between 'real' Gypsies and 'hangers on' based on the degree to which the person resembled the (impossible) fantasy of a 'purebred' Romany, Holloway's research considered Gypsy identity within the context of 'whiteness'. She claimed that the status of Gypsies and Travellers is seen as 'something other than pure white' in the minds of the interviewees, while lacking the accompanying access to power that usually accompanies whiteness.<sup>80</sup>

Often though, studies of whiteness fail to account for the experience of Travellers and Gypsies. Matthew Grant has claimed that in late twentieth-century Britain what it meant to be a citizen was redefined in post-war Britain to consist of 'whiteness, belonging and a basic sense of who deserved access to the nation's resources'.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Gavin Schaffer

and Saima Nasar's study of migration in post-war Britain concluded that 'whiteness most frequently guaranteed better outcomes in terms of acceptance at every level'.<sup>82</sup> While generally true, it is not clear that Irish Travellers migrating to Britain from the early 1960s experienced white privilege in the same way, even while they used their Irishness to hide their Traveller-ness in interactions with British employers and a public that could rarely distinguish between Irish and Irish Traveller accents. The ambiguous position of Irish Travellers in post-war Britain and their complex and ill-defined relationship with citizenship, whiteness and Britishness offers a potentially useful avenue for scholars interested in unpicking the complexities of belonging in a period of significant migration and social change.

We might think about Gypsies and Travellers' ambiguous relationship with whiteness in other ways too.<sup>83</sup> Jodie Matthews has asserted that Gypsies been subject to 'an exoticizing gaze for centuries' in art, literature, fashion, and popular discourse. However, the representation of Travellers in *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* points to something else, not an exoticisation but rather an amplified example of the class disgust bestowed on 'chavs' in the early twenty-first century. Here, a hyper-focus on the consumption characteristics of what was often portrayed as a scion of the 'white underclass' allowed audiences, and the programme makers, to deny race-based motives in their portrayal of Irish Traveller participants.<sup>84</sup> Historians can usefully extend these insights backwards to think about longer histories of the relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the marginalised and 'deviant' poor, not only in terms of their representation but also in potential overlapping life strategies and responses to modernity, and in how they acted as loci for state, missionary and charitable attention and intervention.

\*\*\*

Jodie Matthews has rightly claimed that the (over) representation and fetishisation of Gypsies in arts and literature has not been reflected in their inclusion in national histories,<sup>85</sup> yet it is not the case that academic historians have utterly neglected GRT historical experiences. This article has shown that there is a body of detailed and high-quality scholarship that is growing in volume and approach, and which seeks to explore multiple faces of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history. Together, these comprehensively reveal the lie that it is somehow uniquely difficult to 'do' GRT history, and that its neglect is the result of some innate feature of 'Gypsiness' rather than the preoccupations and priorities of historians themselves.

The challenge then as we see it lies in three directions. First, to extend and sustain detailed scholarship of different aspects of GRT history and to understand their distinct historical experiences, borne in part from the ways in which majority society and states have insisted on treating them as exceptions to be controlled, policed, assimilated or exterminated. Here, the work of Cressy, Mayall, Taylor and others point to the wide range of often mainstream archival sources that might be brought into play; while the insights of family and oral historians and those from within the communities themselves remind us of the potential offered by moving beyond standard academic sources, as well as the ethical challenges this might entail.

If the first challenge is to expand scholarship on GRT history, then the second is to do so while ensuring that it exists in dialogue with wider histories and historical developments. Perhaps most obviously, this would enable historians to develop richer accounts of the experiences of racism within late twentieth century 'multicultural Britain'. But to

focus solely on 'race', however important, would be to miss the historical opportunities offered by bringing the historical experiences of GRTs into conversation with broader historical questions. To take a concrete example. As British historians, aided by the opening of official documents under the thirty-year rule, have begun thinking seriously about the 1980s and 1990s, the presence of New Travellers on the nation's cultural, physical and political landscapes will undoubtedly receive their attention. Exploring the different ways that the 1994 Criminal Justice Act affected all of Britain's caravan-dwellers will allow us reveal connections between Britain's different mobile populations, hereditary and new. Research is likely to show how a mobile lifestyles troubled majority assumptions around the proper use of physical space, an issue that became heightened and personalised for a growing section of the British population in the context of rising home ownership and right-to-buy policies. Such an approach would thus allow us to write Gypsies' and Travellers' experiences into the wider history of late-twentieth-century Britain, while also constructing an analysis of increased legal constraints on stopping which affected Gypsies and Travellers and New Travellers alike. But acknowledging this is not the same as arguing that these very different mobile populations shared similar cultural or social histories. These too offer fertile spaces for historical exploration.

Finally, the long overdue interest in Black and other minority histories prompted by the RHS's 2018 race and ethnicity report and BLM protests in the summer of 2020 appears to have mobilised a new generation of historians keen to develop more nuanced, complicated and ethically attentive accounts of Britain's past. Here we make a plea for ensuring that Gypsies, Roma and Traveller histories form an integral part of this wave of scholarship. This is partly, but not only, about extending the implications of 'decolonising' history to include them. The ways in which Gypsies were positioned in Social Darwinist theories and scientific racism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the use of orientalist tropes to exoticise their lifestyles generally and Gypsy women in particular; and how one of the legacies of empire has been as Bill Schwartz as put it, 'not caring to remember', all suggest that there are profitable ways in thinking through their relationship with the broader intellectual project of decolonisation.<sup>86</sup> We might also fruitfully think about how to engage with pleas to 'decentre' majority concerns so that they include Gypsies and Travellers. Here, rather than a geographical decentring this might demand a theoretical shift to critically expose sedentarism as one of the fundamental touchstones of Western thought and society, and ensuring that GRT voices and experiences where possible, and not simply state papers and official archives, are used to construct their histories. And, perhaps most obviously, writing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories into the mainstream should sit comfortably within any attempt to diversify British and European histories as they are presented in schools, universities, heritage sites and events and public discourse.

Despite all the advances we have outlined and the potential for the field, to date orthodox histories continue to exclude Gypsies and Travellers, as well as Roma, from their accounts. Where they are included, the tendency is still to ghettoise their experiences and render them marginal to broader national histories, in the process reinforcing their status as something alien and 'other'. Without integrating them into our histories we continue, however accidentally, to render them as a people not only outside of time but also outside of British (and European) history. We also run the risk of continuing to

set present-day Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in opposition to an imagined eternal and impossible ‘real Gypsy’ existing outside of time and place.

## Notes

1. Royal Historical Society, *Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History: A Report and Resource for Change* (London, 2018).
2. Aidan McGarry, *Romaphobia: The Last Acceptable Form of Racism* (London, 2017).
3. Most recently via the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021 which includes proposals to criminalise the act of trespassing when making an unauthorised encampment, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05116/>, accessed 2 February 2020.
4. Gill Valentine and Ian McDonald, *Understanding Prejudice, Attitudes towards Minorities* (Stonewall, 2004), p.12
5. See for example those produced by *Traveller Times*, at <https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/heritage>, accessed 3 February 2021.
6. Although see Micheál Hayes, ‘Indigenous Otherness: some aspects of Irish Traveller social history’, *Éire-Ireland* 41: 3 (2006): 133–161; Jim Mac Laughlin, *Travellers and Ireland: Whose Country, Whose History?* (Cork, 1995).
7. On this point specifically see George Gmelch and Sharon Gmelch ‘The cross-channel migration of Irish Travellers’, *The Economic and Social Review* 16: 4 (1985): 287–96.
8. Gypsy or Romany Gypsy continues to be seen as an acceptable descriptor within a UK context, for European Roma the term is seen as highly pejorative.
9. An exception here was those living in the Scots borders, including in the ‘Gypsy village’ of Kirk Yetholm, who claim Romani ancestry. For more on these discussions see Colin Clark, ‘Defining ethnicity in a cultural and socio-legal context: the case of Scottish Gypsy/ Travellers’, *Scottish Affairs*, 54: 1 (2006): 39–67. On Irish Travellers see George Gmelch, ‘Special Issue. Irish Travellers: culture and ethnicity’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2: 1 (1996): 176–177.
10. See for example <https://www.bucks.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-stand/gtrsb-higher-education-pledge>, accessed 13 July 2021.
11. Heinrich Grellmann, *Dissertation on the Gypsies: being an historical enquiry, concerning the manner of life, family economy, customs and conditions of these people in Europe, and their origin* Trans. Mathew Raper (London, 1787).
12. The journal was founded in 1888 and ran in four series up to 1982.
13. See for example Yaron Matras, *Romani: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge, 2002); Yaron Matras, *Romani in Britain. The Afterlife of a Language* (Edinburgh, 2010); Yaron Matras, *The Romani Gypsies* (Cambridge Mass., 2015).
14. Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies* (London, 1972), Thomas Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change. The Development of Ethnic Ideology and Pressure Politics among British Gypsies from Victorian Reformism to Romany Nationalism* (London & Boston 1974).
15. The term was coined by Romani scholar Ian Hancock, but remains a contested label. Also used is the variant spelling *Pharrajimos*, but also *mudaripen/samudaripen* (Romani – mass or total killing) and Roma Holocaust. As non-Romani speakers, and uncomfortable with using words where we are unable to read their nuance, we use the term Roma Holocaust.
16. Gaujo is the Romani word for people who live outside Romani cultural codes. This usually corresponds to people who are not ethnically Romani, but it can also be used in relation to ethnic Romani who do not live within Romani culture, and hence can be pejorative.
17. For original RTE footage from the site at Cherry Orchard Fever hospital, Dublin in 1964 which includes an interview with Grattan Puxon see <https://www.rte.ie/archives/2018/12/17/1017579-travellers-evicted-ballyfermot/>, accessed 27 January 2021. An account of Puxon’s

activities in Ireland, his work mobilising Gypsies in Britain, the formation of the Gypsy Council and Acton's engagement with the education movement can be found in Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*, pp.155–66. Kenrick's PhD was on a Bulgarian Romani dialect.

18. Its main academic platform is the journal *Romani Studies*, launched in 2000 from the then moribund *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*.
19. David Mayall, 'Gypsy/Romani Studies', in Jennifer Craig-Norton, Christhard Hoffmann and Tony Kushner (eds) *Migrant Britain. Histories and Historiographies: Essays in Honour of Colin Holmes* (London, 2018), 197–205, 200–202.
20. David Mayall, *Gypsy-Travellers in Nineteenth Century Society* (Cambridge, 1988). For his account of this and the subsequent development of Gypsy/Romani studies in the UK see David Mayall, 'Gypsy/Romani Studies', in Jennifer Craig-Norton, Christhard Hoffmann and Tony Kushner (eds) *Migrant Britain. Histories and Historiographies: Essays in Honour of Colin Holmes* (London, 2018), 197–205.
21. David Mayall, *Gypsy-Travellers in Nineteenth Century Society* (Cambridge, 1988); see also his 'The making of British Gypsy identities, c. 1500–1980', *Immigrants & Minorities* 11: 1 (1992): 21–41; 'Egyptians and vagabonds: Representations of the gypsy in early modern official and rogue literature', *Immigrants & Minorities* 16: 3 (1997): 55–82; *English Gypsies and State Policies* (Hatfield, 1995); and *Gypsy Identities 1500–2000: From Egipcians and Moon-men to the Ethnic Romany* (London, 2004).
22. For more on Colin Holmes' work see Tony Kushner, 'Colin Holmes; an introduction', in Jennifer Craig-Norton, Christhard Hoffmann and Tony Kushner (eds) *Migrant Britain. Histories and Historiographies: Essays in Honour of Colin Holmes* (London, 2018), 1–6.
23. Becky Taylor, *A Minority and the State. Travellers in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2008).
24. See also Becky Taylor *Another Darkness, Another Dawn. A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* (London, 2014).
25. Frances Timbers, *The Damned Fraternitie: Constructing Gypsy Identity in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (Abingdon & New York, 2016); Sarah Houghton-Walker, *Representations of the Gypsy in the Romantic Period* (Oxford, 2014); Deborah Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807–1930* (New York, 2008); Jodie Matthews, 'Back where they belong: Gypsies, kidnapping and assimilation in Victorian children's literature', *Romani Studies*, 20: 2 (2010): 137–160; Jodie Matthews, *The Gypsy Woman: Representations in Literature and Visual Culture* (London, 2020); Mary Burke, *'Tinkers': Synge and the Cultural History of the Irish Traveller* (Oxford, 2009).
26. Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems, *Gypsies and Other Itinerant Groups. A Socio-Historical Approach* (London, 1998). Other English language publications of theirs include Wim Willems and Leo Lucassen, 'The church of knowledge. The Gypsy in Dutch encyclopaedias and their source', in M. T. Salo (ed.) *100 years of Gypsy Studies* (Cheverly, MA, 1990): 31–50; Annemarie Cottaar, Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems, 'Justice or injustice? A survey of the policy towards gypsies and caravan dwellers in Western Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 11: 1 (1992): 42–66; Wim Willems and Leo Lucassen, 'A silent war. Foreign Gypsies and the Dutch government policy: 1969–1989', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 11: 1 (1992): 81–101; Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems, 'Wanderers or migrants? The movements of Gypsies from Eastern to Western Europe (1860–1940)', in R. Cohen (ed.) *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (Cambridge, 1995): 136–141; Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems, 'The weakness of well-ordered societies. Gypsies in Europe, the Ottoman empire and India 1400–1914', *Review. A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center for the study of economics, historical systems and civilisations* 26(3) (2003): 283–313.
27. See for example Thomas Acton, 'Modernity, Culture and "Gypsies": Is there a meta-scientific method for understanding the representation of "Gypsies"? And do the Dutch



- really exist?', in Nicholas Saul and Susan Tebbutt (eds) *The Role of the Romanies. Images and Counter-images of 'Gypsies'/Romanies in European Cultures* (Liverpool, 2004): 98–117.
28. See for example Miriam Eliav-Feldon, 'Vagrants or vermin? Attitudes towards Gypsies in early modern Europe', in Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler (eds.), *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Cambridge, 2009). 276–91.
  29. Maria Boes, 'Unwanted Travellers ? The Tightening of City Borders in Early Modern Germany', in T. Betteridge (ed.) *Borders and Travellers in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2007), 87–112.
  30. Richard Pym, *The Gypsies of Early Modern Spain, 1425–1783* (Houndsmill, 2007).
  31. See also his article 'The trouble With Gypsies in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal* 59: 1 (2016): 45–70.
  32. Tabitha Stanmore, 'Magic as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *History, the Journal of the Historical Association*, 2021 (forthcoming).
  33. David Cressy, *Gypsies. A English History* (Oxford, 2018), xiii.
  34. David Abulafia, 'The Coming of the Gypsies: Cities, Princes, Nomads', in P.C.M. Hoppenbrouwers, A. Janse and R. Stein (eds) *Power and Persuasion. Essays on the Art of State Building in Honour of W.P. Blockmans*, (Turnhout, 2011) 325–42.
  35. Bill Donovan, 'Changing perceptions of social deviance: Gypsies in early modern Portugal and Brazil', *Journal of Social History* 26: 1 (1992), 33–53.
  36. Ann Ostendorf, "'An Egyptian and noe Xtian Woman': Gypsy identity and race law in early America", *Journal of Gypsy Studies* 1: 1 (2017): 5–15; Ann Ostendorf, 'Racializing American 'Egyptians': shifting legal discourse, 1690s–1860s.' *Critical Romani Studies* 2: 2 (2019): 42–59.
  37. Andrew Connell, *"There'll Always be Appleby". Appleby Gypsy Horse Fair: History, Mythology, Evaluation* (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2019).
  38. <http://rtfhs.org.uk/>, accessed 12 January 2021.
  39. <http://www.robertdawsongallery.co.uk/>, accessed 3 February 2021.
  40. Roma will be included as an ethnic category in the 2021 census, until these results are published the actual number can only be an estimate. The figure of 200,000 is based on Philip Brown, Philip Martin and L. C. Scullion, 'Migrant Roma in the United Kingdom and the need to estimate population size', *People, Place and Policy Online*, 8: 1 (2014): 19–33.
  41. Vanya Kochanowski, 'Some notes on the Gypsies of Latvia', *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 25: 3–4 (1946): 112–116; Matéo Maximoff, 'Germany and the Gypsies: from the Gypsy's point of view', *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 25: 3–4 (1946): 104–108.
  42. Although see Sybil Milton, 'Nazi policies towards Roma and Sinti', *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 2: 1 (1992): 1–18; Henry Friedlander, *Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to Final Solution* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995).
  43. Most of his work, including his keystone text, *Rassenutopie und Genozid. Die nationalsozialistische 'Lösung der Zigeunerfrage'* (Hamburg, 1996) was published in German. However, see his 'The National Socialist "Solution of the Gypsy Question": central decisions, local initiatives, and their interrelation', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 15: 3 (2001): 412–427.
  44. For competing positions on this see Guenter Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (Oxford, 2000), especially p.223; Ian Hancock, 'Downplaying the Porrajmos: the trend to minimize the Romani Holocaust. A review of Guenther Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 3:1 (2001): pp. 120–7.
  45. Anton Weiss Wendt (ed.), *The Nazi Genocide of the Roma. Reassessment and Commemoration* (NY and London, 2013). See also his edited collection *Eradicating Differences: The Treatment of Minorities in Nazi-Dominated Europe* (Cambridge, 2010). For a similar position see Roni Stauber and Raphael Vago (eds), *The Roma: A Minority in Europe: Historical, Political and Social Perspectives*, in particular Michael Zimmermann's direct rebuttal of Lewy's position. For a single country study see János Bársony and Ágnes Daróczi (eds), *Pharrajimos: The Fate of the Roma During the Holocaust* (New York, 2008).



- For a general annotated bibliography see Ilse About and Anna Abakunova, *The Genocide and Persecution of Roma and Sinti. Bibliography and Historiographical Review* (International Holocaust and Remembrance Alliance, 2016).
46. Gilad Margalit, *Germany and its Gypsies. A Post-Auschwitz Ordeal* (Madison, WI, 2002). Also Gilad Margalit, 'The representation of the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies in German discourse after 1945', *German History*, 17:2 (1999): pp. 221–40. See also Susan Tebbutt (ed.), *Sinti and Roma. Gypsies in German-Speaking Society and Literature* (New York, 1998).
  47. Julia von dem Knesebeck, *The Roma Struggle for Compensation in Post-War Germany* (Hatfield, 2011).
  48. See for example Tea Sindbæk Andersen and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (eds), *Disputed Memory: Emotions and Memory Politics in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe* (Berlin & Boston, 2016); Adam Bartosz 'Ways of commemorating Roma extermination sites in Poland', in M. Bistrovic, (ed.), *Killing Sites. Research and Remembrance* (Berlin, 2015), pp. 179–184; STAUBER, Roni Stauber and Raphael Vago 'The politics of memory. Jews and Roma commemorate their persecution', in Roni Stauber and Raphael Vago (eds), *The Roma. A Minority in Europe: Historical, Political and Social Perspectives* (Budapest & New York, 2007), pp. 117–34.
  49. Ari Joskowicz, 'Romani refugees and the postwar order', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 51: 4 (2016): 760–787.
  50. Generally see Zoltan Barany, *The Eastern European Gypsies. Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics* (Cambridge, 2002), chapter 4; Becky Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn. A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* (London, 2014), chapter 6. For specific national contexts see Brigid O'Keeffe, *New Soviet Gypsies: Nationality, Performance, and Selfhood in the Early Soviet Union* (Toronto, 2013); Celia Donert, *The Rights of the Roma. The Struggle for Citizenship in Post-War Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge, 2017); Sarah Marks, 'The Romani Minority, Coercive Sterilization, and Languages of Denial in the Czech Lands', *History Workshop Journal*, 84, Autumn (2017): pp. 128–148
  51. Jodie Matthews 'Where are the Romanies? An Absent Presence in Narratives of Britishness', *Identity Papers: A Journal of British and Irish Studies*, 1: 1 (2015), p. 86.
  52. For example Steve Poole, 'Tales from The Old Bailey: writing a new history from below', *History Workshop Journal*, 59: 1 (2005): pp. 282–4.
  53. Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton and Oxford, 2009).
  54. Jason Gibson and Helen Gardner, 'Conversations on the frontier: finding the dialogic in nineteenth-century anthropological archives', *History Workshop Journal*, 88: 2 (2019): pp. 47–65.
  55. Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*.
  56. See Norfolk Record Office, Norwich: MC 114/2/24,583 × 6.
  57. Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, *I'm a Freeborn Man* (New York, 1968), p.15.
  58. Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon. The Folklore of a Family of Scots Travellers, The Stewarts of Blairgowrie* (Manchester, 1986).
  59. This despite some promising work which might have led in that direction. See for example Sally Alexander, 'St Giles's fair, 1830–1914: popular culture and the industrial revolution in 19th century Oxford', *History Workshop* pamphlet, 1970; Raphael Samuel, 'Local history and oral history', *History Workshop Journal*, 1: Spring (1976): pp. 191–208.
  60. For example Lorely French, 'An Austrian Roma family remembers: Trauma and gender in autobiographies by Ceija, Karl, and Mongo Stojka', *German Studies Review* (2008): 64–86.
  61. Elisa Martin and Juan F. Gamella, 'Marriage practices and ethnic differentiation: The case of Spanish Gypsies (1870–2000)', *The History of the Family*, 10: 1 (2005): 45–63
  62. Jelena Čvorović, 'Serbian Gypsy narrative: Between preferred and true identity.' *The Oral History Review*, 36: 1 (2019): 45–70.
  63. Gilad Margalit, 'Obituary: Michael Zimmermann', *Romani Studies*, 17: 1 (2007): 125. We have been unable to discover the reason for the Central Council's objections.

64. Kevin Myers, 'Historical practice in the age of pluralism: educating and celebrating identities', in Kathy Burrell and Panikos Panayi (eds) *Histories and Memories. Migrants and their History in Britain* (London & New York, 2006): 35–53. See for example the transcripts of the Roma Support Group Oral History project, archived with the London Metropolitan Archives: LMA/4761. For publications see Peter Saunders et al, *Gypsies and Travellers in their Own Words* (Leeds TES, 2000); Essex Traveller Education Service, *One in a Million. A Story of Hardship, Endurance and Triumph in a Traveller Family* (Chelmsford, 1999); John Keenan and David Hines (eds), *In Our Own Way. Tales from Belfast Travellers* (Belfast, 2000).
65. See for example Anna Farmer (ed.), *My Life on the Road. An Autobiography by Nan Joyce* (Dublin, [1985]2000); Roger Leitch (ed.), *The Book of Sandy Stewart* (Edinburgh, 1988); Jimmy Stockins with Martin King and Martin Knight, *On the Cobbles. The Life of a Bare-Knuckle Gypsy Warrior* (Edinburgh, 2000).
66. John Seymour (ed.), *The Book of Boswell: Autobiography of a Gypsy* (London, 1970).
67. Nan Joyce, Traveller. An Autobiography (Dublin, 1985).
68. Betsy Whyte, *The Yellow in the Broom* (Edinburgh, 199), and *Red Rowans and Wild Honey* (Edinburgh, 1990); Jess Smith, *Jessie's Journey. Autobiography of a Traveller Girl* (Edinburgh, 2002); Dominic Reeve, *Smoke in the Lanes* (London, 1958), *No Place Like Home* (London, 1960), *Every Which Way We Turn* (London, 1964), and 'The Changing Life of the Romany, *Country Life*, 17 October 1963, 38–39; Maggie Smith-Bendell, *Our Forgotten Years. A Gypsy Woman's Life on the Road* (Hatfield, 2009), and *After All These Years Our Gypsy Journey Continues* (Hatfield, 2013); George Locke, *Big Louie and Me. Caravans, Curses and Cockfight* (Hatfield, 2013); Damien le Bas, *The Stopping Places. A Journey through Gypsy Britain* (London, 2018).
69. See for example Sharon Gmelch and George Gmelch, 'The emergence of an ethnic group: the Irish Tinkers', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 49: 4 (1976): 225–38; George Gmelch, *The Irish Tinkers: The Urbanisation of an Itinerant People* (Menlo Park, 1977); Sharon Gmelch, 'Economic and power relations among urban tinkers: the role of women', *Urban Anthropology* (1977): 237–247; George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch, 'Begging in Dublin: the strategies of a marginal urban occupation', *Urban Life* 6: 4 (1978): 439–454.
70. Judith Okley, *The Traveller-Gypsies* (Cambridge, 1983): 231.
71. See for example Coretta Phillips, 'The trouble with culture: A speculative account of the role of Gypsy/Traveller cultures in "doorstep fraud"', *Theoretical Criminology*, 29: 3 (2019).
72. David Sibley, *Outsiders in Urban Society* (New York, 1981): 18–19.
73. Peter Kabachink, 'Place Invaders. Constructing the nomadic threat in England', *Geographical Review*, 100: 1 (2010): 91.
74. Joanna Richardson, 'Talking about Gypsies: the notion of discourse as control', *Housing Studies*, 21: 1 (2006): 77–96.
75. Zoe James, 'Policing marginal spaces: controlling Gypsies and Travellers', *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 7: 4 (2007): 376.
76. Taylor, *A Minority and the State*, 83–4.
77. David M Smith, and Margaret Greenfields, 'Resisting assimilation: survival and adaptation to "alien" accommodation forms. The case of British Gypsies/Travellers in housing', *Today's Children Tomorrow's Parents: an interdisciplinary journal*, 40–41 (2015): 69.
78. Royce Turner (2002) Gypsies and British parliamentary language: an analysis. *Romani Studies* 12/1 pp. 1–34.
79. Colin Clark and Elaine Campbell, 'Gypsy Invasion': A critical analysis of newspaper reaction to Czech and Slovak Romani asylum-seekers in Britain, 1997', *Romani Studies* 10: 1 (2000): 23; Colin Clark, 'Glasgow's Ellis Island? The integration and stigmatisation of Govanhill's Roma population', *People, Place & Policy Online* 8: 1 (2014).
80. Sarah L. Holloway, 'Articulating otherness? White rural residents talk about Gypsy Travellers', *Transactions of the Institutions of British Geographers*, 30: 3 (2005): 358.

81. Matthew Grant, 'Historicizing citizenship in post-war Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 59: 4 (2016): 1192.
82. Gavin Schaffer and Saima Nasar, 'The white essential subject: race, ethnicity, and the Irish in post-war Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 32: 2 (2018): 222.
83. For the application of critical whiteness concepts to Roma in Czechia/Slovakia see Victoria Schmidt and Bernadette Nadya Jaworsky, *Historicising Roma in Central Europe. Between Critical Whiteness and Epistemic Injustice* (London, 2021).
84. Keith Hayward and Majid Yar, 'The "chav" phenomenon: consumption, media and the construction of a new underclass', *Crime, Media, Culture* 2: 1 (2006): 9–28; Imogen Tyler, "'Chav mum chav scum". Class disgust in contemporary Britain', *Feminist media studies*, 8: 1 (2008): 17–34.
85. Jodie Matthews, 'Visibly authentic: images of Romani people from 19th-century culture to the digital age', in Helen Graham and Jo Vergunst (eds.), *Heritage as Community Research: Legacies of Co-production*. (Bristol, 2019): 69.
86. Bill Schwartz, 'Forgetfulness. England's discontinuous histories', in Stuart Ward and Asrid Rasch, *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain* (London, 2019): 49–58.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

This article has been funded by ESRC grant: ES/S015280/1

## Notes on contributors

*Becky Taylor* is Professor of Modern History at the University of East Anglia and her research focusses on minority and marginalised groups and their relationship with the state.

*Jim Hinks* is Research Fellow on the ESRC-funded project 'Gypsies and Travellers Experiences of Crime since the 1960s: A Mixed Methods Study'.