

Where now?

passing places

It's for all of us to decide...

History shows us, from Elizabethan times right up to the present day, that there has often been an uneasy relationship between settled folk and Travellers.



Lucas 'Levi' Parker



Emma Kefford
Image: Jane Heastler



Chopper Smith
Image: Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies



Swales Howell relaxing at Southend carnival
Image: Jane Heastler



Young mother at Sandy Lane c.1970s
Image:

The travelling communities will always be with us. We will always be passing each other. It is up to all of us, Traveller or non-Traveller, Gypsy or Gorgio how well we live beside each other.

Politics is never far away from the debate about Travellers' rights and responsibilities. Right now, at the beginning of the 21st century, there is probably even more need than ever for political debate about the needs, rights and responsibilities of Travellers and how these relate to the settled community.

Like it or not, prejudice and its more powerful cousin, discrimination, is also part of this debate. Pub signs (below) are still commonplace.



Travellers at Gravessend late 1930s
Image: Mrs. Cherry Cooper



Image: Diane Allen



Left - right Swales Heastler, Henry Heastler and Donald Ives
Image: Jane Heastler

What, however, would our reaction be if the word 'Jews' or 'Blacks' or 'Irish' were to be transposed for 'Travellers'? Society has a blind spot when it comes to Travellers. This must be remembered when we discuss the issues of Traveller site provision, human rights and even the issue of rubbish collection.

In many ways, we are all part of this debate, we all have our own views and even prejudices.

For both Travellers and non Travellers our passing places should always be at the very least informed, free thinking and then hopefully, more productive.