



Romanichal Gypsies

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

Editors Choice

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The Romanichals (descendents of the gypsies who left North India about 1,000 years ago and the local travelling craftspeople who survived the persecution of 1550-1650 in England) make up more than half of the whole Traveller population in Britain. Other groups include Irish Travellers (Minceir), Scottish Travellers (Nawkens), The Kale from Wales and, since the 1960s, New Age Travellers (whose numbers were increased by the housing crisis of the 1980s).

The complicated and often tragic history of the Romanichals and other Travellers is clearly and accessibly explained but much of the book is devoted to the present-day lives of Travellers both here and in the U.S. - how they earn their living, their values and religion, their art and culture as well as their often fraught relationship with government and local councils which is putting their way of life under threat. The author acknowledges the help of many Gypsies with this book and it focuses facinatingly on the lives of these real people - from the Harris family of Thistlebrook Gypsy caravan site whose children go to Boxgrove School to Alex Smith of Thurrock Council's Gypsy site whose father sold horses to the Tsar of Russia.

This is an outstanding addition to a good series (other titles include Australian Aborigines, Rainforest Amerindians and Kurds). Acton is Reader in Romany Studies at the University of Greenwich and a leading authority and activist on issues to do with Traveller People. His book is not only full of clearly presented and absolutely up to date information but it conveys the affection and respect of the author for the people he is writing about and their way of life. Gallant's sensitive and informative photographs complement the text well.

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