

THE PROJECT

WITH SUPPORT FROM HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND, RURAL MEDIA RAN WORKSHOPS, ORAL HISTORY SESSIONS, AND CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS WITH VOLUNTEERS FROM THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITY.

We used the original radio ballad - *The Travelling People* - plus archive footage and photography to spark the interest of young Gypsies and Travellers. We created a documentary film fronted by *Travellers' Times* Editor-at-Large, Damian Le Bas, which reflects on the themes raised in the original ballad and explores how those themes resonate today, what's changed in the culture and what subjects a new, contemporary ballad would need to address to be relevant and meaningful.

Music and song were essential elements of the original recording. The documentary builds to the recording of our modern radio ballad, taking the form of a contemporary folk song with lyrics by Damian Le Bas based on quotes from the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed for the project. These words were then set to music composed and performed by Irish Traveller folk singer Thomas McCarthy, with violin and female vocals from Charlotte Andrews, aka Charley Blue, Charles Parker's granddaughter.

The full documentary, plus lots of extras including audio interviews with participants, photographs and archive materials, are all available on the *Travellers' Times* website in the new heritage section. We've been delighted to connect with Jess Smith, a writer, campaigner and Scottish Traveller who remembers the programme makers visiting sites in Scotland when she was a young girl, and Travellers Liza Mortimer and Riley Smith, whose grandmother Minty Smith featured prominently in the original ballad.

Rural Media are interested in hearing from anyone with a personal connection to *The Travelling People*. The original programme saw Charles Parker, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger interview people across the UK from Scotland to Kent. Do you or anyone you know remember being part of the *Ballad of the Travelling People*? Or do you remember it being played on the radio in the 1960s? If so we would love to hear from you at info@ruralmedia.co.uk.

