

TRAVELLING PEOPLE

Broadcast 17 April 1964

Singers

Ewan MacColl
Peggy Seeger
Belle Stewart
Jane Urquhart⁵
Joe Heaney
John Faulkner

Musicians

Alfie Kahn clar+picc+harm+flute
Peggy Seeger banjo+guit
Alf Edwards conc
Jim Bray dbass
Bruce Turner clar+sax
Dinah Demuth oboe
Danny Levan³
Dave Swarbrick⁴

Named Speakers

Caroline Hughes¹
Alec McGregor²
Wester Boswell
Cornelius Lee
Maggie Cameron
Sheila McGregor
Carrie Bond
Celia Benham
Alec McGregor
RT Baker
Mr Strangeward
Jimmy Higgins
Alderman Harry Watton
Minty Smith
Belle Stewart
Bill Lee
W Cole
Tom Jonell
Mrs MJ Bond
K Stanley
Celia Benham
T Baker
John Hughes
Gypsy Williams

¹ sang...

² played spoons and mouth music

³ recording only (but uncredited on record sleeve)

⁴ rehearsal only (but credited on record sleeve)

⁵ Jane Stewart, now married

Text

1

**My mother said I never should
Play with the gypsies in the wood.
If I did she'd surely say
Naughty lad to disobey.**

They call us the wild ones
The Pilgrims of the mist
Romanies gypsies Didekais mumpers travellers
Nomads of the road
Black-faced diddies
Cause were gypsies were dark they call us kier boshas, black people.
Gangrel bodies. Some said it more polite than others.
In Carlisle they call you potters, dirty potters this, dirty potters that.

On a rock on the shore is the cormorant's dwelling.

The wild warbling blackbird has its nest in the tree.
The birds of the air and the fish of the ocean,
Each has its own place, but there's no place for me.

2

They seem to come almost from nowhere overnight. They're a bit like the starlings in Birmingham. They're here and they're making a mess.

You're just a worker, and move on, your work's finished, you move.

What are we to do with misfits? Some of them, I would say, the maggots of society.

They're just not well they just can't be bothered to live like us.

The fox has its lair and the rabbit its burrow,
The sett for the badger, the hive for the bee,
The weasel, the hare, the mole and the marten -
Each has its own shelter but there's no place for me.

Traffic noise.

3

I was expecting one of my children, you know, one of my babies, and my husband he's sent for the midwife and in the time that he's gone after the midwife the policeman come along. 'Come on', he says, 'Get a move on. Shift on', he says, 'Don't want you on here, on my beat.' So my husband says. 'Look, he says sir, let me stay,' he says, 'my wife is going to have a baby.' 'No, don't matter about that,' he says, 'You get off.' They made my husband move, and my baby was born going along and my husband's stayed in the van and my baby was born at the crossroads in my carryvan. The horse was in harness and we were travelling along the road and the policeman was following behind, drumming us off and the child was born, born on the cross roads.

Born in the middle of the afternoon
In a horse-drawn wagon on the old A5;
The big twelve-wheeler shook me bed,
'You can't stop here', the policeman said.
You'd better get born in some place else,
 So move along get along move along get along
 Go! Move! Shift!

Get that up he says... and get the blazes out of here.

Born in the tattie-lifting time
In an old bow tent near a tattie field.

The feirmer said the work's a' done,
It's time that you was moving on,
You'd better get born in some place else,
 So move along get along move along get along
Go! Move! Shift!

You stay in a place and they'll tell you to move you on and you don't move on they'll, they'll
summons you and say why don't you go back to your own county. Well what county we got?
We ain't got no county.

Born on a common near a building site
Where the ground is rutted by the trailers' wheels;
The local people said to me,
You'll lower the price of property,
You'd better get born in some place else,
 So move along get along move along get along
Go! Move! Shift!

So we pulled in there and we were there about a week and he came back again hounding us
again move on we don't want you here, move on. I says where are we going to go? He says we
don't give a damn where you go he says. You gotta move on, anyway.

Wagon, tent or trailer born,
Last week, last year or in far-off days.
Born here or a thousand miles away.
There's always men nearby who say:
You'd better get born in some place else,
 So move along get along move along get along
Go! Move! Shift!

It was a wagon and horse and we were on the road when I was born. We travelled from pillar
to post. And I mean to say I've been doing it all my life for fifteen years.

I suppose practically from the beginnings of civilisation we've been travellers.

The real tinkers far back, you know after the Battle of Culloden and after Glencoe, the
people, so many of them being murdered in their houses, by the English, they took hundreds
and hundreds of them, fled to the Lowlands of Scotland. Well they had no home, they'd no
chattels or anything with them, and they started to live out, dug-outs you know or into
caves. Well they became nomads of the road. McFee, Stewart, MacKenzies, MacLeans,
every name you can get... the remnants of the clans of long ago.

Our Saviour travelled, didn't he dear, our Saviour travelled. He was born in a manger among
straw, his mother's carried him on a little donkey's back, if it goes by the way of the world

to the Bible. Must keep up that generation to the last of the world. It was the first of it and it'll be the last of it.

**Born at the back of a blackthorn hedge,
When the white hoar frost lay all around;
No Eastern kings came bearing gifts,
Instead the order came to shift.
You'd better born in some place else,
 So move along get along move along get along
 Go! Move! Shift!**

Our Lord travelled one time.

**The winter sky was hung with stars
And one shone brighter than the rest;
The wise men came, so stern and strict,
And brought the order to evict.
You'd better get born in some place else,
 So move along get along move along get along
 Go! Move! Shift!**

They took them many years to get to this shore, they believe, from India. But my father's teaching taught to me from his father, my grandfather Wester, and therefore he would get it from his father Tyso Boswell, and Tyso Boswell would get this information from his father again which was Shadrack Boswell. If you refer to Genesis in the Bible you will find Abraham and Sariaye of that time, and they didn't bear any children, those two people, but Sariaye had a maidservant and the Lord told Abraham to go in the tent with the maidservant, and she conceived, it says in the Bible, and there was a child. Now eventually Sariaye had become jealous of this girl and the baby and told Abraham that she'd had to go. And of course she drove the servant and the child off. And you read further on that the Lord found her crying beside a well, and he put his hand on her head and told her to arise, and she would go into a far country and she would accumulate a family or a tribe, and they would deal in cattle and sheep and they would be a despised race but they would be a clever race.

4

If you took a traveller and set him in the middle of the desert he would find a living there. He would even sell that sand to the Egyptians.

Jack of all Trades.

**There's some as say that I'm a rogue, a Gypsy Jack of Spades,
A lousy lazy tinker, but I'm really Jack of All Trades,
I travel up and down, know every corner of the nation,
And I can always turn my hand to any occupation.**

I'm a roving Jack of all trades, of every trade and all trades,
And if you want to know me name, they call me Jack of All trades.

I've been a roving tinker with me bag up on me shoulder,
Made pots and pans, a real dab hand, with me tin-snips and me solder;
I can mend a chair or catch a hare or make a wicker table,
And when it comes to grinding knives, sure no-one is more able.

I'm a roving Jack of all trades, of every trade and all trades,
And if you want to know me name, they call me Jack of All trades.

He knows no bosses, no gaffers, he could make a living out of the dirt of a man's feet, he
could make money out of old rope.

I've sold the baskets and the creels and the scrubbers made o' heather,
I've laboured in a thousand fields, in every kind o' weather.
I've pu'd the berries there at Blair and many a ton I've shifted
I've thinned the beets and shawed the neeps, I've Buchan tatties lifted.

Agricultural working, making pegs, repairing umbrellas, fighting, in a ring, horse dealing,
chopping and changing. Fruit picking tater picking harvesting grinding mat mending.

Many's a horse I've bought and sold, stallion colt and brood mare;
I've trained 'em in the winter time and sold 'em at the horse fair.
At Barnet and at Appleby they knew me well in season,
You'd always see me at Brough Hill, likewise at Kirkby Stephen.
I'm a roving Jack of all trades, of every trade and all trades,
And if you want to know me name, they call me Jack of All trades.

In winter when the days are short, it's in the toon we're walking,
Our baskets on our airms while we dae a bit o' hawking.
We dukker whiles and try and sell oor wares and bits o' laces,
But for every open door there's ten are shut hard in our faces.

You go to the ladies' houses, big houses, you knock on the door and the lady comes out. Are
you going to buy off a lucky gypsy today my dear, come and have your lucky hand read, and I
will tell you your past, present and future. You know, my dear, gypsies are like poets, they
are born, not made. Come and have your lucky hand read.

You'll find me on the building jobs where'er there's pick and shovel;
I'll work behind the dozer, clearing up the muck and rubble.
You'll find me with the pylon gangs or on the steel erecting,
Crawling like a human fly and always death expecting.

Well I poured the first concrete in Hatfield New Town that 13 storey block and I poured right up until the last beam.

**In summer I go round the farms and do the old paint spraying,
And sometimes I'm down on my knees doing the asphalt-laying.
And when the summer days are past and winter comes a-stealing,
You'll find me gathering junk and rags and working at scrap dealing.**

And I'm a useful man to the community.

**I'm a roving Jack of all trades, of every trade and all trades,
And if you want to know me name, they call me Jack of All Trades.**

5

Don't I wish they old times would come back again, when we used to go and have a drink at a public house, all come back on the old common singing, hang on our pots great big suetty puddens, hocks of bacon, pigs' heads, we done nice then.

It was a good life and I still like the life today

**I'm a freeborn man of the travelling people,
Got no fixed address, with nomads I am numbered.
Country lanes and by-ways were always my ways
I never fancied being lumbered.**

That urge seems to come on me after a certain time... I like to move on

**O, we knew the woods, all the resting places,
And the small birds sang when winter time was over;
Then we'd pack our load and be on the road,
They were good old times for a rover.**

We had a gay old life... we was happy in the summer time all hawking the houses and going from door to door and having waur tea and having waur singsong between the houses.

(mouth music)

When you were going along the road, and they said we're going to a certain place to camp tonight but youse girls'll stop behind and you'll hawk, and they would pull bunches of grass and leave it on the road and you followed that grass to let you know the way that they went, d' ye see.

**There was open ground where a man could linger,
Stay a week or two, for time was not your master.
Then away you'd jog with your horse and dog,**

Nice and easy, no need to go faster.

You see more, more life when you're travelling along the road cos you go from one stopping place to another you see different people every day.

Dik at the gavvers. Dik at the gavvers Archie. Tell your Dyas. Dordie, dordie, dordie these chavvies.

There's lots of things you see, dear, we can talk, without you understanding us.

Oh, tis Mandy went to poore the grus all around the stuffers se kye
The gaffer's after Mandy to Leon may you pray
Ma said directly, pickin' up the cuffel
'Tis like your dear old Daddy says you can't core a well.
Well all around the stoggart, a stealin' a bit of cast,
The gaffer said what have you got, I had to put it down.

We knew a good house from a bad, a shahn kier and a barrie kier, or if she wasn't in they would say 'The manishee's awree today, we'll no get oor slab'. The woman's away today we'll no' get our tea.

**Now and then you'd meet up with other Travellers,
Hear the news or else swap family information,
At the country fairs, we'd be meeting there
All the people of the travelling nation.**

That yearling...give me something decent ...it's a decent pony though that. I'll take thirty six quid for it.

It was the assembly ground of the original gypsy people. They all met here once a year ... to be sure of meeting their friends and relatives at Brough Hill Fair

It's a stag time of year now you know.

Aye, but it's not a good time to sell a, a yearling is it. There's a bit of blood in that, something to look at there, isn't there

Aye, aye, but you don't want too bloody in this high climate, something that'll live outside and live cheap... something with a bit of constitution... I'm never happy if I've too much blood about me. I like something like half and half, nothing much nearer than half and half in our country.

Well you live in a very high country...

**O, I've kennt life hard and I've kennt it easy
And I've cursed the life when winter days was dawning;**

**But I've danced and sang through the hael necht lang
Seen the summer sunrise in the morning.**

(mouth music with spoons)

Quite a lot of our people they go back with the old stories, you know. They wouldn't walk down that wood there if it was dark at night case they seen a ghost or a banshee or something, because round their firesides the old people used to tell them stories.

But we're standing as close as whaur Alec's sitting there, and I'm - Wish't there lad - they were up at this big auld place. They called it Barrachalden... but Mary and her father that night when they were there, they'd all went to bed. They'd been sitting ceilidhing away to the last hour Mary said, but all on a sudden she heard pipes comin', and she turned round and she said to her faither: I'd advise you she says faither to put oot the light, because she says this is some of the drunk travellers coming frae Oban, and she says if you keep the lights on you will be bothered to death a' night and we'll never be able to rise in the morning. I never saw the likes of you, he says, Mary, never in my life. Well, she says, when folks drunk you dinnae want to be bothered with them. You ken they'll be carrying on with they pipes a' night, and God'll no gi us the privilege of getting war eyes closed. So her old father obeyed, and he put out the light. Every one of them kept beautiful new tents of their own. But Mary she heard the pipes coming nearer and nearer and nearer till they come walking right in to the camp, and Mary said with the watter that she'd dreht on the fire the wind was just blowing, just trying to make her coal light. But she says I lifted the side of the door and lookid oot Maggie, and as sure as God's in the kingdom o' heaven she said I nearly jumped out o' the bed. My heart went quicker she says than a traction engine. There was two wee men and they would nae be as tall she says as me Cairn terrier, wi' curled up shoes on them and pickit bonnets, lang whiskers on 'em and the size of their airms she says was like, just the length of your hand. Two sets of pipes and they kept going in time round the fire and round the fire, one reel after another, and she says I was even feared to blow breath. And they kep us wakin' she says till God sent the first streak of light in the morning before they disappeared.

**I've made willow creels and the heather besoms,
Lifted tatties, pu'd the berries and gaed hawkin';
And I've lain there, spent, happed up in the tent,
And I've listened to the old folks talking.**

You've got Boswells, you've got some Lees on this hill. There's the Smiths from Lancaster and there's some Watnells on the hill. There's some Errons, some Pattersons and some Youngs. Peterborough Gaskins, Elliotts, Lees, what we call the London Lees, and of course when you get into Norfolk round Norwich and East Deerham and Kings Lynn, you get a lot of the Greys and further down the Gumbles, Gaskins, the Lees, the Hopkins...

...Stewarts, McFees, McAllisters, Johnsons, Williamsons...

There were McKenzies and McFees

So neatly as they placed their knees
And walloped the tinsies at their ease
Around the moss o' Burreldale.

O, some o' them did gather rags,
And some o' them blew up their bags,
And some o' them dealt in yags,
Around the moss of Burreldale.

**All you freeborn men of the travelling people,
Every tinker, rolling stone and Gypsy Rover:
Winds of change are blowing, old ways are going,
Your travelling days will soon be over.**

6

**I like to settle in the wintertime
Away from the weather in a country town,
But come the spring I'd get itchy feet,
Then goodbye town and smoky street
I'd want to be moving some place else,
So move along get along move along get along
Go! Move! Shift!**

There's nothing beats the lovely heather and the moors and the birds whistling and the
clear burn and you've nae coo nae care as the Scotchman says.

Well it ain't a bad life in the summer, but I think about the winter, not the summer - I think
about the winter.

That's the Terror Time.

No place to go nor doesn't know where to go. Doesn't know any place to go and sit. It
doesn't matter whether it is snowing or blowing, you've got to go.

**The heather will fade and the bracken will die
Stream will run cold and clear.
And the small birds will be going,
And it's then you will be knowing
That the Terror Time is near.**

**Whaur will ye turn noo, whaur will ye bide
Now that the wark's a' done?
For the fairmer doesna need ye
And the Council winna heed ye,
And the Terror Time has come.**

And there was about three foot of snow, and would you believe that I had to pull down that tent among that snow. And when I come fornent the police office in Auchterarder, the horse fell. The horse fell down, and the two policemen come out with their fingers in their tunics like that, and commenced to sneer and laugh. 'My word', I says, 'Youse better men have something to laugh at.' 'Get that up', he says, 'And get the blazes out of here.'

**The woods give no shelter, the trees they are bare
Snow falling all around.
And the children they are crying
And the bed in which they're lying
Is frozen to the ground.**

**The snow winna lift and the stove winna draw,
There's ice in the water churn,
In the mud and snaw you're sloshing
Trying to dae your bit o' washing
And the kindling winna burn.**

Where would you rather be tonight, sitting in a comfortable house, nice and clean, your children nice and clean? What's this life here? What's this life for children?

**Needing the warming of your own human kind,
You move near a town, but then
Well, the sight of you's offending,
And the police they soon are sending...
And you're on the road again.**

7

We never did travel much in the winter time. We always had pieces o' ground that we always went to. Even in this country, there used to be greens left out, like we weren't going on private ground. None of the authorities ever bothered you, but nowadays they're stopping all the camping grounds.

**Once you could pull in with your caravan
To a sheltered spinney or to open ground,
But the law moved in with the barbed wire fence,
And they said that your camp was a prime offence
And told you to shift and keep on going,
So move along get along move along get along
Go! Move! Shift!**

My great grandfather, he looked at me one morning, we was sitting down, minding the horses, we was, he said, 'My son,' he said, 'Years ago, when I was a boy,' he said, 'See that place there, that park?' I says, 'Yes, Grandfather.' 'We used to stop on that', he said,

'Twelve month, two year at a time. Till a lord came along', he said, 'he put a bit of fence up and that's how they got the ground', he said, 'By pinching it, bit by bit.' That's how you come your squires and your lords. They've no more right to that ground than what you and I have. The ground don't belong to no-one.

Once you could settle for a week or two
On a public common or a river side,
But the Council chased us off the sites
And they said you people have no rights,
And you'd better get moving some place else,
 So move along get along move along get along
 Go! Move! Shift!

I think that you're endeavouring to defend something that is historically outdated: the tinker and the wanderer. There may be places for them in some parts of the world but there isn't in an industrialised urban community.

8

The auld ways are changing, ye canna deny
The day o' the Traiveller's over,
There's naewhaur to gang and there's naewhaur to bide,
So farewell to the life o the rover.
 Goodbye to the tent and the old caravan,
 To the tinker, the gypsy, the travelling man
 And goodbye to the thirty-foot trailer.

Fareweel to the cant and the traivelling tongue,
And fareweel to the Romany talking,
The buying, the selling, the old fortune-telling,
The knock on the door and the hawking.
 Goodbye to the tent and the old caravan,
 To the tinker, the gypsy, the travelling man
 And goodbye to the thirty-foot trailer.

You've got to move fast to keep up wi' the times,
For these days a man canna dauder,
There's a by-law to say you maun be on your way
And another to say you can't wander.
 Goodbye to the tent and the old caravan,
 To the tinker, the gypsy, the travelling man
 And goodbye to the thirty-foot trailer.

In this age, the atomic age, where is a Traveller going to stand for making a living?

Farewell tae the besoms of heather and broom,

Farewell tae the creel and the basket;
The folks o' today they would far sooner pay
For a thing that's been made oot o' plastic.
 Goodbye to the tent and the old caravan,
 To the tinker, the gypsy, the travelling man
 And goodbye to the thirty-foot trailer.

It's machinery for everything. I'm sure they're no' much work you'll get now but what a machine's in its place.

Farewell to the pony, the cob and the mare,
The reins and the harness are idle;
You don't need the strap when you're breaking up scrap
So farewell to the bit and the bridle.
 Goodbye to the tent and the old caravan,
 To the tinker, the gypsy, the travelling man
 And goodbye to the thirty-foot trailer.

Fareweel tae the fields where we've sweated and toiled,
At pu'ing and shawing and liftin',
They'll soon hae machines
And the traivelling queans
And their menfolk had better be shiftin'.
 Goodbye to the tent and the old caravan,
 To the tinker, the gypsy, the travelling man
 And goodbye to the thirty-foot trailer.

9

These days have gone. Us people we've changed in the last years.

We're changing and we don't want tae.

They're in the majority and we're in the minority. They are gradually pushing us out.

Every move we make, they find some way of getting us out again, on the move.

A squad o' they police chased us. It was up in the Black Country, Birmingham, I think they call it, the speed cops. We couldn't get leave to take our tea at the road side. They chased us and followed us along the road until we were out of their district. Then another load of them come and chased us down to the next district. We were three days and three nights on the road till we come to Newcastle upon Tyne.

Tourists? You can get in. Gypsies? Out youse go, come on.

Get away, gypsies, we don't want you here.

Why don't you go back to your own county?

Youse tinks, get up and get away out of that.

Come on get out get a move on.

10

I mean we're fed up with gypsies living in our area. We're sick to death of them.

Vagrants, filthy dirty people. I object to calling them gypsies. Nothing but lazy people.

I would say the Gypsy was a gentleman. These people are not.

**O, the Gypsy is a gentleman and he always knows his place,
He never troubles anyone and he rarely shows his face,
He knows the ways of nature, he's reticent and shy
And never pesters Gorgios to sell or yet to buy.**

**And the wind is on the heath and the heath is far away
From towns and private property where decent people stay.**

**O, the Gypsy is a gentleman, and he always tips his hat,
His face is weather-beaten and he wears a red cravat;
He wanders through the forest, adding to his Gypsy lore,
Or he's leafing through *Lavengro* and he's never ever poor.**

**And the wind is on the heath and the heath is far away
From towns and private property where decent people stay.**

**O, the Gypsy is a gentleman, give credit where it's due,
He never parks his caravan where it can spoil the view;
And if you find a pony grazing in your garden plot,
Don't blame the noble Gypsy, but that awful tinker lot!**

Pat and Jeff they were sitting in the lounge and they heard this scrunching outside, They didn't know what it was. They both sat still in their seats. When they opened up the curtains at the French windows, there was a horse looking in the window at them.

**O, the Gypsy is a gentleman, he keeps well out of sight,
His caravan is picturesque, it's colourful and bright;
He's full of ancient wisdom and of wit he has great store,
Not like those thieving Diddies who come knocking on the door.**

**And the wind is on the heath and the heath is far away
From towns and private property where decent people stay.**

People think of gypsies, round camp fires, with a scarf round their head and playing a violin, a pretty dark-haired bit dancing, you know, but if they've got to come in contact with it...

O, the Gypsy is a gentleman, and he plays the violin,
And tinkers and hedge-mumpers, they are not of his kin.
When you smell the smell of wood-smoke and the hedgehog in the pot
You'll find him carving objets d'art... not like that other lot.
And the wind is on the heath and the heath is far away
From towns and private property where decent people stay.

11

People get the impression all these gypsies are rogues and thieves that'll steal your hens and steal this and steal the next thing. Don't go to the door, they'll put a curse on you. They can read fortunes always. It's wonderful, my friend.

They say we leave litter and mess up the land,
We're the dirty travelling people.
But who laid the blight on each mill and factory site?
Was it us - or the Gorgio people?

I think it's disgusting that they live the way they do, but they've chosen that life. If they hadn't chosen it, would they go about so filthy and dirty?

They say we're a menace to the health of the land,
The unhealthy travelling people,
But who poisoned the air and the rivers everywhere?
Was it us - or the Gorgio people?

I was down there with the Town Clerk last Tuesday, and the conditions are really absolutely deplorable.

They say we're dishonest, not worthy of trust,
The thieving travelling people,
But who kills for gain, who robs banks and holds up trains?
Is it us - or the Gorgio people?

We're supposed to steal other people's children? Gypsies have got too much children of their own to steal anybody else's

They say we are quarrelsome, given to blows,
The violent travelling people.
But who starts the wars, breaks the first of human laws?
Is it us - or the Gorgio people?

I'm not against them living the way they do, but I just don't think they should be allowed to live the way they are so close to civilisation.

**They say we are backward, retarded and dull,
The ignorant travelling people,
But who judges and condemns men who are different to them,
Why, you do - the Gorgio people.**

Their honesty is suspect, to put it mildly. They're dirty. Their, their children are dirty. Many of the children can hardly talk... in English. It's a most peculiar dialect.

12

They can't read or write... I would like to read and write.

I'd have liked to got to learn in school, you know, but, through the winter with all the snow on the ground, you've like, got a month in school and then you were taken out and you were moved along, you know to another camp. Well, what you got in one school, you lost it all going to the next school. All I ever learnt in school was to read and write my name and my little brother and sister, they're not much better than myself you know. But I suppose, a few months in some other school, maybe 'll learn them something.

Come on, wake up, page nine. Right now, you start, Sheila. 'She lived all alone in a house in the woods. Close by lived a sly old...fox.

When they did come to us we found then that in school they were very very timorous indeed and gave the impression that they were in need of a great deal of protection from the ordinary child in the school.

They send you to school and every playtime, when you finish your lessons:

Gypsy Gypsy live in a tent,
Can't afford to pay the rent.
Gypsy Gypsy live in a van,
Cooks his dinner in an old tin can.

I wasn't a scholar, I was a fighting man at school. My brother Joss was. He had to defend the young ones, I had to defend the young ones. At every school there was a cock. The cock of the school, he had to be beat, the gypsy boy.

Tinky tinky tinker, whaur was you born,
In among the tatties with your breeks a' torn.
Tinky tinky tinker wi' yer kail and yer leeks,
Yer mammie's gain a hawking... in your faither's breeks.

Tinker, Darkie John, Tinky John, I got that steady, all the time at school... just throwing away, throwing stones at you. Away home to your tinky mammie, away home.

Wha saw the tinker bodies?
Wha saw them gang awa'?
Wha saw the tinker bodies
Marchin' through the Broomielaw?
Some o' them had boots and stockings,
Some o' them had nane at a',
Some o' them had prams and barrows,
Marchin' through the Broomielaw.

That brother of mine was kept seven years in one class. And my mother went to the teacher and asked why my brother wasn't able even to sign his own name, and the teacher, she says, och, I would never dream of learning that laddy on anything, he's the best message laddy I have in the school. She's sent him messages here, messages there, message for this teacher, clean the blackboard, sweep the floor, and to this day he cannae sign his ain name.

My mother said I never should,
Play with the gypsies in the wood
If I did, she'd surely say,
Naughty lad to disobey.

Out out out out out out out out out out...

And after that you go back in school and you're full, you feel that you could murder somebody. You are a person with some feeling and you feel so much that you want to cry all day and you don't learn anything, or you want to go and you half kill some of the children that's around you and you go mad altogether. You're asking me what I'd got to keep up. I ask myself, what am I fighting to keep down.

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Bloody isn't it? This, you know. My mother said you shouldn't play with Gypsies. What the hell do they know about them? I mean it's not only ignorant mums and ignorant dads, but it's also ignorant governments. I mean, if it is the layman in the street that is persecuting them, surely the government could step in and stop it. They're not all ignorant in Parliament, surely, the majority of them maybe, but not all of them.

It starts off when you go to school. You seem to be frightened of something. There's always somebody seems to be chasing you.

**My mother said, I never should,
Play with the gypsies in the wood.**

My mother said I never should

Play with the gypsies.

We're sick o' it, we're hounded the same as Hitler hounded the Jews.

In some parts of Perthshire they would think more of a dumb animal, a beast in the field, a cattle beast, as they do a tinker.

You know because we're gypsies, is there any harm with us going in a beer shop and getting served with a pint of beer? Near enough every beer shop, 'No gypsies allowed'.

A dog's life. It is. Proper dog's life.

Some houses you would go to would put the dog if they saw you coming. Before ever they heard what you wanted.

Some people chase you away as if you were an animal.

Just treat you as if you were animals. As if you'd seven lives.

And it was just opposite the doctor's hoose there. So they've ta'en him to the doctor, but the doctor wouldn't hear a word o' him getting inside his surgery. He was a tinker and he had to go to the garage. So they took my faither and stretched him oot on the garage floor, and it was a naughty cold day and he says, och, he says, this man's dead, the doctor's said, I can't do nothing for him. My mother was standing there greetin' with me in her airms. He was just Tinker Donal MacGregor and that was the end of it.

**Tinky tinky Tinker whar was you born?
In among the tatties wi' your breeks all torn.**

**Tinker, oh tinker, cover your face,
You're no' a paid-up member of the human race.**

We're classed like the Deep South in America. We're just black men.

When they see me coming, they shut the door.

We're penned in.

Do you mean to tell me you wouldn't be better off in prison?

I've seen them clash the door in my face and they near had it closed clashed in the way you was standing.

It makes me feel very deeply that anybody should be treated the way I am.

The other girls was older than me and they would say, 'Donnae bring in the haben, it's the dugel's cheet'. Dugel's dog. This means, Don't take that food as though you was starving of hunger, because that looks very like the dog's dish.

Do you mean to tell me they aren' classing us as pigs?

You would drop dead in England... for a can of water. And they wouldn't give it to you.

A dog's life.

More or less it's like prison, our life. We got to be in by a certain time at night, if we were on that road after hours at night. And if the police sees you on the road, they'll get you in the car and they'll hold you in it. Cos when I see a car coming up the road I jump in the hedge so they don't see me. You gotta do it, because they say you ain't out for doing no good this time of night. Specially if they know you're a gypsy.

**Gypsy gypsy live in a tent,
Can't afford to pay the rent.**

I know it'll be no different, they will always be down on us, people will pick on us... always will.

The poor tinker people, whenever they heard the police was to come, they were up and away, whether it was wet or dry.

Every time we pull off on the side of the road, we've got the police coming there to shift us on. So where can we go and what can we do?

Where are we going to go? Summonses every morning.

They want you to move at eleven o' clock at night, and they were there at seven o' clock in the morning to see me on the road.

The police were waiting at the caravan door for me with a summons. Every mornin

They would say, all youse potters is all troublemakers, we're sick of you.

If you was to see for yourself you'd say well, I wouldn't have that life for no money.

There were a lady, a gypsy woman, and she was pregnant, and she was in labour pain, and she went to four or five doors to see where she's get a drink. She had a basket with her, like, and you know, her wares in it, and she was in Doncaster, and she crossed over to the other street, went to about twenty doors, and do you know there was not one of them people would give her a drink of water. In labour pain and they wouldn't give her a drink. She was carried off the street to the hospital. That's the God's truth. And it was her first baby.

Whaur saw the tinker buddies?

Whaur saw them gang awa?
Whar saw the tinker buddies?
Gypsies, traivellers and a'.

Some of them were gassed at Belsen,
Some at Buchenwald did fa'.
Others kennt the Auschwitz ovens:
Men and women, bairns and a'.

My mother said, I never should
Play with the gypsies.

The people treat us like dogs. They think we're nothing but dogs, and to tell you the truth,
I think of them as dogs.

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Can't see no way out, perhaps if we was in houses, perhaps they might treat us more better.

Dark the night, the winds of change
So sharp and keen do blow...
The cock it crows with iron throat,
It says that we must go,
It says that we must go.

The hunters follow hard behind,
The hounds they make their din...
The woods are gone that sheltered us,
And none will let us in,
And none will let us in.

You live a different life and people I think have so much... trouble understanding someone
that lives differently to the way they do.

They're just not... well they just can't be bothered to live like us.

The hard-eyed men who guard the road,
They bid us choose our way...
And yet they will not let us go
Nor will they let us stay.

These folk will exist to the end of time and they'll never ever change their ways and you'll
never get rid of tinkers. They'll be there till Doomsday in the afternoon.

Five hundred years of timeless days,
We wandered through the land...

But now the guardians of the clocks
Have said our race is damned,
They say our race is damned.

How far does it come in your mind before you say I have done everything I possibly can and I will help the broad mass of these people. But there are some I can do nothing with whatever, then doesn't the time arise in one's mind when one has to say, all right, one has to exterminate the impossibles. I know all that leads to in one's mind, Naziism, who is it next, the Gypsies, the tinkers, the Jews, the Coloured Man. I don't accept that really on these particular

Well, I don't think... exterminate's a terrible word... you can't really mean that?

Why not?