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Which lesser-known Gypsiologist took this fine portrait of Mrs Skarrett and Mrs Draper in 1928, plus dozens of others? See page 24 to find out.



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# Newspapers, Black Patch Gypsies and canal folk: what's in store for your 2017 Society Day

By the *Routes* Editorial Team

As we announced in September 2016, the RTFHS Society Day for 2017 takes place on Saturday 13 May in Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands. So we hope you've saved the day and will join us there.



Hear all you need to know about online newspapers with Find My Past research expert Alex Cox



Canal boat ancestors? Steven Knight, creator of the BBC drama series *Peaky Blinders*, tells us about his.

Meet the Romany Gypsy families who made Black Patch their home with local historian and author Ted Rudge.

Plus RTFHS bookstall • Research helpdesk • Displays about local families researched by RTFHS member and author Josie Tombs • Plenty of chances to chat and share your family history research

**The venue:** The Trinity Centre, Church Hill, Mill Street, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B72 1TF.

**How to get there:** the Centre is a short walk from Sutton Coldfield station with frequent connections to and from Birmingham New Street: a 20-minute journey. There's ample free parking at the Centre and easy connections to motorways from all corners of the country.



Look out for the full programme and a booking form in your March 2017 edition of *Romany Routes*.

# Elijah Lee's Children

By Eric Trudgill



## About the author

Eric Trudgill focussed his research initially on Boswells, Bucklands, Lees and Smiths who might be ancestors of his wife, Anne-Marie Ford. He's written a RTFHS Family Tree book on each of them, six articles on each for *Romany Routes*, and 13 articles on each for the website Gypsy Genealogy, through which he can be contacted. He now focusses equally on other notable 'tribes', and has written further Family Trees books for four, articles on 16 for *Romany Routes*, and articles on 84 of them for Gypsy Genealogy.

Elijah **Lee**, baptised in Bredon, Worcestershire in 1815 son of Samuel and Hannah, grandson of John and Phillis, was a brother of the Sampson Lee I discussed in the September 2016 edition of *Romany Routes* (christened, RTFHS member Bob Collins has just discovered, in Elmstone Hardwicke, Gloucestershire in 1810). Elijah married Samson's sister-in-law Rosanna **Buckland** (baptised in 1822, daughter of Edward Winggi Buckland and Lucy **Boswell**).

They had the following children: John baptised in Bishampton, Worcestershire in 1839; Samson born about 1841; Jemima baptised in Dilwyn, Herefordshire in 1844; Sophia baptised in Pirton, Worcestershire in 1845; Jane baptised in Cardington, Shropshire in 1848; Christmas baptised in Llandyssil, Montgomeryshire in 1852; Delia born about 1854; Melvinia baptised in Llangower, Merionethshire in 1857; Walter baptised in Pembrey, Carmarthenshire in 1859; Thomas born about 1860; Llewellyn baptised in Penllyn, Glamorgan in 1862; Silas baptised as Celus in Aberystwyth, Cardiganshire in 1864; and William born about 1866.

Of these children John, Samson and Christmas married their cousins Elephear, Gravalina and Perrin Lee, the children of Sampson and Eldorifa I discussed in the last issue, Sophia allegedly married her cousin Job Lee (christened in 1844) son of Samson and Eldorifa, and Llewellyn allegedly married Martha Lee daughter of his cousin Magenis (I haven't been able to confirm either union), and Jemima perhaps died young, but here's some of what I've found about the remaining seven.

### Jane Lee, baptised in 1848

She married Moses **Heron** (christened in 1845, son of Alfred and Rebecca), who subsequently married her sister Melvinia, and had the following Heron children: Heza, christened in Bishopston, Glamorgan in 1876 (who allegedly married an Edith) and Phoebe, christened in Sketty, Glamorgan in 1878 (who allegedly married a Kenza Lee).

### Delia Lee, born about 1854

She married Crimea Heron (son of Alfred and Rebecca), and had the following Heron children: Rosanna, christened in Llangyfelach, Glamorgan in 1879, presumably the Rhoda who married John **Mochan**; Julia, born about 1881, who allegedly married her cousin

only have to pay if you want to take a look at or download the original documents. [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

### **Encampment on Belvedere Marshes, Kent**

Ryalla Duffy has written a short illustrated article about the community who lived on the marshes at Belvedere in Kent, from the late 1890s until the 1950s. This, at the time, was the largest Gypsy encampment in the UK. The article is in a blog on the *Travellers' Times* website, dated 22 July 2016, and includes a number of old photos of people who lived there plus their wagons, tents and huts. The surnames Ryalla briefly mentions are **Lamb, Scarrot, Rutherford, Turner, Pearce and Cooper.**

<http://tinyurl.com/hnoctms>

## **Mrs Cooper - the centenarian Gypsy farmer: a chance newspaper find**

### **By the *Routes* Editorial Team**

The following item was found recently during a general search using the term "Gipsy **Cooper**" at the British Newspaper Archive site: [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk). Do the elderly farmers Mr and Mrs Cooper belong to your family tree? If so, it would be interesting to know their first names and more about Mr Cooper's military service.

From the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 1 February 1908

#### **“*The Simple Life***

*A striking instance of the value of an open air life is furnished by an interesting old couple who dwell in their own caravan and cultivate their own plot of land, some three acres in area, between Great Marlow and Medmenham. Gipsy Cooper, as the old man is called, is 93, whilst his wife has reached the ripe old age of 101. Besides their dwelling van, for which they paid £130, they own a couple of other caravans, with which they attend fairs from time to time. Both are hale, hearty, and keen witted. Mrs. Cooper, despite her advanced years, is not only a busy housewife, but also handy at outdoor work in winter or summer. Her husband, who saw long service in the Oxfordshire Regiment, has a fund of stories of other ways and times, and will readily demonstrate his physical vigour by dancing a hornpipe on a table.”*

said that she went to see him at Aldershot before he went away on 1 May 1916. When he died their baby was only six weeks old and if her memory was correct William never saw his only son, William Frederick Henry Penfold. Beatrice was asked if she wanted a verse on William's headstone

and she requested *Though death divides, fond memory clings.*

**The Editor:** "Our thanks to The War Graves Photographic Project for kind permission to publish the photo of William's gravestone shown on the previous page: <https://www.twgpp.org>"

## What do you know about...?

....**Sunridge Camp, Farnham, Surrey?** **The Editor asks:** "In the Electoral Register of 1932 for Farnham (now available to view in digitised form at [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk)), I came by chance across a number of people living at a location called 'Sunridge Camp'. From background searches on their names, they are all Romanies. There are James, Alfred, Walter and Eliza **Baker** at 1 Sunridge Camp; Eliza Baker and Walter Baker next door at No. 2; Joseph, Elsie Beatrice, Horace and Amy **Hoadley** at No. 4; and Moses and Rose **Williams** at No. 8. There are no other people listed with that address. Does anyone know what 'Sunridge Camp' was and whereabouts it was located in Farnham?"

...**Tabitha Boswell and her odd monument in Ringstead church?** **Brian Heppell asks:** "I recently came across a site about the Northamptonshire town of Ringstead. It includes an article about a Tabitha **Boswell** who died in 1784 and was buried at Ringstead, described in the register as "an old gypsie". What seems most remarkable is that she is commemorated by a marble memorial plaque in a strange location inside the church. It's high on a wall in the chamber where the bell-ringers stand, far above their heads and partially hidden by a vertical ladder to the roof. So it's likely that it's totally unknown and invisible to visitors to the church. The plaque gives Tabitha's age as 80 years. The Ringstead website also mentions two other definite Gypsy burials at that period: that of Esther Boswell, "a young Gypsie", who died a few days before Tabitha; and of Sara **Nichols**, "gypsey, reputed wife of J. a Chelsea Pensioner", with no date given by the author of the article. In 1801 there's a Mary **Bosworth**, alias **Bozeat**, widow, who the author suggests may be a Gypsy. Does anyone know anything about Tabitha and her family?"

# Meet the Gypsiologists

**Ivor Evans: a less familiar name**  
by Brian Heppell

In my series so far, I have concentrated on the more famous experts on British Gypsy lore and genealogy. As I've researched their lives, I've bumped into the names of other Gypsiologists who weren't in the spotlight in the same way that **Groome, Winstedt, Thompson, Yates, Scott Macfie** and **Shaw** were but who have also made important contributions to the studies of our Romany ancestors and left us with valuable written and photographic records of them through the pages of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, in the Special Collections, University of Liverpool, and other archives and through their own published works. For the most part, the people I will be writing about from now on are those who were at their prime in the middle decades of the 20th century. This means that the Romanies they knew and interviewed are, for some of us, only a generation or two removed from our own.

My first candidate among these "lesser-knowns" is **Ivor Evans**. He was a British anthropologist, ethnographer and archaeologist who joined the Gypsy Lore

“... Fortunately for today's family historians, Evans was also a keen photographer. On his travels to visit his friends in their encampments, mainly in South East England and the counties of East Anglia, he took many fine portraits of the people he knew....”

Society in 1927. He was born in Cambridge in 1886 to Arthur Humble Evans, a private tutor, and Edith Frederica **Phipps**, both north country people. He was educated at the Charterhouse School in Godalming, Surrey and he then went to study for a degree at Clare College, Cambridge.

When Evans graduated, he first went to work in Borneo (modern-day Malaysia) for about a year as a colonial administrator for the North Borneo Chartered Company. He then worked at the Perak State Museum from 1912 until 1932, becoming the curator in 1917. His studies of the history, culture and archaeology of the people of Borneo were obviously a great love but he was constantly frustrated by bureaucracy. So on his frequent holidays from his museum work, he returned to England. Here he



## About the author

Brian Heppell has been a keen family historian since the 1990s, with roots in the North East, Suffolk, Liverpool and Oxfordshire. He developed an interest in Romany genealogy and in the Gypsiologists after meeting his wife Sharon in 1994.



New feature

# Lesser-known Surnames

The Picketts  
by Sharon Heppell

In the second of our new occasional series about the rarer surnames to be found in British Romany Gypsy families, we take a look at the name Pickett.

It was Silvester Gordon **Boswell** who first alerted me to the existence of **Pickett** as a Romany surname. Here's what he has to say about them in his autobiography *The Book of Boswell* (published by Victor Gollancz, 1970):

“...There was a family there in Wenhaston (Suffolk), with a rod tent in a little orchard just behind the little chapel. Their name was Pickett: one brother and three sisters. He was called Lumas, one sister was called Sally and I forget the name of the other two. We used to visit them often as boys. Lumas had a grinding barrow near the tent: his sisters would bring knives and scissors for him to sharpen. He also used to make stable lamps from glass sweet jars. He'd fit them into a sort of carrier made of tin and he would solder a handle on them – drop a tin candlestick down – and with a candle fitted in, that was a stable lamp of those days. I don't remember who their father was but their mother was a **Draper** – a very beautiful woman. It was said then, although the name of Draper is heard very little today, they were real Romany people. Many of them travelled around Hitchin and Biggleswade when I was a boy, and I believe many have been settled in that area for years now.”



RTFHS Committee Member Jeremy Harte (left) talking to visitors to the RTFHS Open Day in Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, in 2015.

## Please lend a hand at a Society event in 2017

We attend a number of family history fairs each year with the RTFHS bookstall. If you have a little time to spare, why not join us on the stand so that RTFHS team members can get a break? Check the 2017 Diary Dates on page 47 to see if we're heading to a venue near you. And please consider helping at our own events.

# Searching the 1939 Register

By the *Routes* Editorial Team



Audrey Collins - Records Specialist, Family History, at The National Archives, London - joined us at the 2016 RTFHS Society Day at Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire, to introduce us to the 1939 Register and how best to locate ancestors on the move. These tips come from Audrey's talk, supplemented by the research experiences of RTFHS members.

The Register is currently only available from Find My Past: [www.findmypast.co.uk/1939register](http://www.findmypast.co.uk/1939register). Use the 'Advanced Search' facility to get the best results. The site offers free name searches and sight of the original Register entries on a pay-to-view basis.

## What is the 1939 Register?

- It's a virtual 'census' of the population of England and Wales.
- It was taken on 29 September 1939, three weeks after the outbreak of World War II.
- Its main purpose was to issue people with ration books and identity cards.
- Only a tiny number of people actively avoided registration. Some thought - mistakenly - that the Register would be used for conscription.
- No registration meant no ration book and that meant no food.
- The Register records name, date of birth, marital status and occupation but not relationships between household members.
- Women who married after 1939 will have their married surname added beside their former name.

## Tip 1

Search by using a typical occupation - 'hop picker', 'palmist', 'showman' - rather than only by forename or surname.

## Tip 2

Search by using 'Caravan' as the address, without a name, in order to find all those not living in a house in a particular town or county. Using the word 'Tent' can be more tricky as the results will include place-names with 'tent' in it: 'Tenterden' is one example.

## Tip 3

Anyone travelling for a living in 1939 - from commercial salesmen to entertainers who went from theatre to theatre - had to register for a 'traveller's ration book'. This gave them the ability to get food rations from local shops wherever they had temporary digs. It's understood that Gypsies, Travellers and Fairground people were issued with these ration books too. We understand that these 'mobile workers' were advised to put the word 'Travelling' in front



# From parish registers and certificates

*Romany Routes* has a long tradition of bringing you finds from parish registers and, more recently, we've also asked you to let us have your transcriptions of birth, marriage and death certificates.

As always, to protect people's privacy, we will only publish details of births/baptisms that took place before December 1920, marriages before December 1940 and deaths/burials before December 1965.

All of the following have been kindly provided by RTFHS member Kaziah Fleming and we'd like to express our thanks to her for answering our appeal. Now over to you! Please make it your New Year's resolution for 2017 to share your own parish register entries and certificates with other members too.

## Baptisms

**SMITH**, Maria, daughter of Levi and Sophia Smith, baptised 25 September 1836, Scalford, Nottinghamshire. Abode: Scalford. Occupation: Gypsies.

**SMITH**, George Oxby, son of John and Maria Smith, baptised 18 March 1868, Stanton on the Wolds, Nottinghamshire. Abode: Stanton. Occupation: Gypsies.

**SMITH**, Mary Ann, daughter of John and Maria Smith, baptised 6 May 1870, Arnold, Nottinghamshire. Abode: Arnold. Occupation: Horse Dealer.

**SMITH**, Kezia, daughter of John and Maria Smith, baptised 17 November 1873, Kimberley, Nottinghamshire. Abode: Kimberley. Occupation: Hawker.

## Births

**SMITH**, Sara Mente, daughter of Maria Smith. Born 24 December 1856, Eastwell, Nottinghamshire. Informant: The mark of Maria Smith, Mother, Eastwell.