

INTRODUCING AN RTFHS

SOUTH COUNTRY FAMILY ALBUM

PART 1

This book was first published by the Romany and Traveller Family History Society (RTFHS) in 2007 and then reprinted in 2014.

It is a fine collection of old photographs kindly contributed by RTFHS members. These show members of their own families, mainly people who lived in or travelled in the southern counties of England, stretching from Kent to Cornwall, in the past 100 years or so.

The photos have simple captions, usually only the names of the individuals in them, where known, but sometimes with dates of birth and death, locations and relationships.

This book has been out-of-print for a number of years. The RTFHS is now making it available as two free PDF downloads: Part 1 and Part 2.

This is partly to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Society that took place in 2019 and partly to put the book's contents into the public domain again. In this way, we hope that many more people with British Romany Gypsy or Traveller roots can enjoy it and perhaps also discover an ancestor or two within its pages.





An RTFHS
South Country
Family Album

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Cover photograph: Gypsies at Eversley, Hampshire, taken by Frank Mason Goode in about 1865.

An article by Eric Otto Winstedt, entitled *Kingsley's Gypsies* (Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society Third Series Volume 22, pages 119-122, 1943) describes the family of Damon or Damon Lee. Mr Winstedt states that the woman on the left is almost certainly Vansi, daughter of Arthur and Nation Smith, and wife of Damon Lee's brother Harry. His identification of the central figure is less certain but he believes it to be Damon's sister Martha (Pat), who married Vansi's brother Jack Smith. The boy is thought to be one of her sons. Mr Winstedt can only speculate on the identity of the woman on the right, but believes that she may be one of Damon's nieces, possibly Keziah Gregory.

From *Gypsies at Eversley* by Alan McGowan (Romany Routes Vol 4 No 5, pages 176-177).

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Family Album

Foreword

When you glimpse the interior of a vardo in an old photo – or even the inside of a bender tent – there’s often a family photo or two hanging or standing there. Browse through old volumes of the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society and you’ll read many accounts by the likes of the Reverend George Hall and T W Thompson, recalling the day they visited the home of a Boswell or a Smith or another friend who proudly showed them the elaborately framed portrait of a long-gone ancestor.

For the family historian of the early 21st century, such images and such tales are so tantalising. For our burning questions today are: “So where are all those wonderful photos now?” “Why did nothing get passed down to me?” Or perhaps, “Is there someone out there with a photo of their family that also happens to have my great-granny Teni or old uncle Adolphus in the background?”

This album hopes to start to answer some of those questions. For it brings together family photos from a number of different sources, generously loaned by their owners and collated and beautifully arranged by Janet Keet-Black to create a first for the Society: a publication that focuses on images rather than on the written word.

In doing so, it is helping not only to preserve those precious photos for posterity but also to record the names of the individuals within them: something that is often lacking even in the family albums themselves. It is also making these images more widely available so that others can share this important visual heritage – and, with a great deal of good fortune, perhaps discover a missing ancestor or relative among the many faces.

Sharon Floate

Vice Chair – Romany and Traveller Family History Society

June 2007

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all those RTFHS members who so willingly loaned us their precious family photographs for inclusion in this first RTFHS Family Album, including Jean Hope Matthews, Ian Orchard, Tracy Searle, Peter Cole, Janet Keet-Black, Kerry Hawkins, Margaret Montgomery, Lesley Doe, Laurie Taylor and Dennis Coombe.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,
Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,
Should sad Despondency my musings fright,
And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away,
Peep with the moonbeams through the leafy roof,
And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof!

John Keats

Found in a postcard shop, photographer unknown.





Sophia Small 1859-1948



Freedom James, daughter of Sampson and Kate (née Collins). Bournemouth c1918



**Freedom James,
Bournemouth c1920**



Jemima James (known as Cissy)



**Bournemouth c1920-21
Lucy James and Lily James
(mother of Jean Hope Matthews)**

Sisters Lily and Freedom James c1918-20



**Ann Hope daughter of Terence and
Ellen née Camfield. Colchester.**



Sophia Small 1859-1948

Sophia was the daughter of Moses and Caroline Small. In 1882 both her hands were amputated after they were run over by a train.

When she came out of convalescence Sophie went back to work, as she continued doing until she was in her eighties. She married and went on to have seven children.

Sophie was a very pretty young woman (see photograph page 5) with a waist of only 18 inches when she was a young girl.

From Margaret Montgomery



Sophie with son-in-law Jack Norris (in car) and grandchildren, Rita/Phyllis, Johnny, Kathleen (on Sophia's lap) Norris, and Doris Holmes (shading her eyes)



Sarah Rawlings (Cole)



Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.

Thomas Hood

Sarah Woods (Cole)



**Violet Hope, daughter of Terence
and Ellen Hope née Camfield**



Olive Stacey (Cole)

**Freedom Cole née Rawlings,
grandmother of Peter Cole**





Patience Rawlings



Keziah Rawlings (Cole)



**Britannia Orchard outside Cargreen
Vicarage, Saltash, Cornwall, pre 1919.
She said she would allow the vicar to take
her photograph if he bought the broom
from her for ten shillings.**

Ian Orchard



**Britannia Orchard née Sanders,
daughter of Edward and Susan
Sanders née Orchard.**

**Calling at Sheviok, near Torpoint,
Cornwall c1940.**

Anne Hope on left, late 30s – early 40s



**Standing: Louie Sanders and Charlotte Orchard née Orchard.
Seated: Louie's daughters – Betsy, Amy and Susie.
c1926**





**Christina Matthews, daughter of
Jean Hope Matthews, Aug 1982**



Daisy White seated, and Cissy James



**Hilda James daughter of
Sampson and Kate**



Freedom Swallow née Cole



Dolly Hope, Colchester, year unknown



Anne Hope, year unknown

A daughter of Lena Coles

She was a tawny gipsy girl,
A girl of twenty years,
I liked her for the lumps of gold
That jingled from her ears;
I liked the flaring yellow scarf
Bound loose about her throat,
I liked her showy purple gown
And flashy velvet coat.

From *The Gipsy Girl*

By Ralph Hodgson 1917





**Betsy Smith née White with her daughters
Lulu, Nellie (?) and Daisy**



**Epsom Downs early 1940s
Left to right: Dolly Ball,
Kath Saunders née Butcher,
Ruth Butcher née Saunders,
Emma Stanley.**

**Ellen Hope née Camfield
with friend Mrs Woods**



**Aunt Cissy (to Jean Hope Matthews) and
Ciss Anderson. Bournemouth early 1930s**



**Jean Hope Matthews,
Stourpaine, September 1987**

I have loved flowers that fade,
 Within whose magic tents
Rich hues have marriage made
With sweet unmemoried scents:
 A honeymoon delight,
 A joy of love at sight,
 That ages in an hour
My song be like a flower!

Robert Bridges



Louise White née Crutcher



St Peter's Church, Lower Parkstone, Dorset 1921
Ciss White in light hat holding baby; her sister Tottie Stanley in centre front row.
Possibly amongst others are Ayres, James and White.



Left to right: George James, George Butcher, Cissie Butcher née James, Albert Saunders, May Griggs née Saunders, Doris James née Couch. Bournemouth, year unknown.

Below left: Ina Walton née James on right, with children John and Tory. Taken when Ina was with the circus.

Below right: Ina James with son John, and Cissy James at back. Freedom James, Lily James in hat, Ida Walton, man standing George Butcher snr, young boy George Butcher, man with kettle Jack Walton, one time circus bare-back rider. Fair-haired girl, Ina's daughter Tory.



ABOUT THE ROMANY AND TRAVELLER FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY (RTFHS)

Founded in 1994, the RTFHS was the first and is still the only British Family History Society dedicated to helping people to research their Romany Gypsy, Traveller and Fairground ancestors.

Join us to find out more about your roots, meet people who share your interests and learn about your heritage. Membership brings you:

- Four journals a year full of family history and social history features, old photos, research tips and finds
- Opportunities to get together with fellow researchers at Society Days and Open Days
- Members only email group

Find out more at the RTFHS website – www.rtfhs.org.uk – or on Facebook.

Or contact enquiries@rtfhs.org.uk.

For information about the wide range of other specialist publications available to buy from the RTFHS, please go to www.rtfhs.org.uk/publications