THE MEANING OF HORSES

Patricia Burke Wood
Professor, Department of Geography
York University, Toronto, Canada

Research Report for the Irish Traveller Movement, Dublin

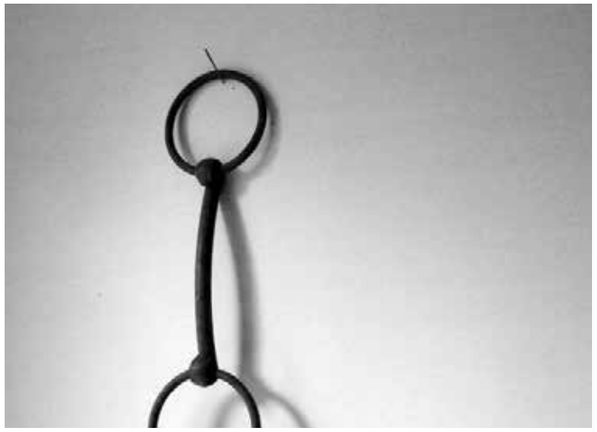


CONTENTS

Context of the study	5
Original uses of horses	6
Economic activities	9
Raising horses, building bonds	10
Cultural symbolism and identity	12
New challenges and the loss of horses	14
Conclusions	17
References	18
Acknowledgements	19



Horses are so deeply embedded in the culture, identity and everyday life of Irish Travellers that there is little more obvious than to state that horses are important to them. The task of asserting the centrality of horses to Traveller life and identity is deceptively simple, and yet it is also monumental. The relationships between horses and Travellers are so vast and rich, so axiomatic to the workings and well-being of their communities, that the elaboration of those relationships takes more than a few words.



Context of the study

In response to recent governmental efforts to control horses, Irish Travellers have found themselves required to assert details of the significance of horses to their culture and daily lives. New restrictions on the keeping of horses introduced by the 1996 Control of Horses Act, the lack of provision to keep horses within the space of (or immediately adjacent to) halting sites and grouped housing schemes, and in extreme cases the seizure of horses – all have a significant impact on Traveller life. Particularly in the face of horses being seized and impounded, Travellers are compelled to explain to the rest of Irish society the severe impact brought about by the loss of horses within their communities.

In December 2012, in a submission to Cork County Council on the Draft Control of Horses by-law, the Traveller Visibility Group (a member of the Cork City Council horse forum) explained forcefully:

"It is crucial to recognise, as part of the process of drafting any control of horses bye-laws, that in the context of the Traveller community horses play a central role in the lives and activities of Traveller families and of men and boys in particular. This is a community whose traditions and lifestyle were formed around horse ownership and where horses occupy a functional, occupational, and therapeutical role. (...) Traveller horse ownership must be understood and seen as vital social capital that must be preserved and protected by policies and legislation."

Despite their importance, little has been documented on the roles of horses in the Travelling community. Indeed, relative to the study of other communities in Ireland, there is little scholarship available to consult on Travellers.

In order to have a more thorough and systematic discovery of the meaning of horses, fieldwork was carried out between 2012 and 2014 in Dublin, Co. Cork and Cork City, Co. Kilkenny, Co. Kerry, Co. Tipperary, Co. Cavan, Co. Sligo, Co. Mayo, Co. Galway and Galway City – including interviews and focus groups with several dozen members of the Traveller community, with support workers (some of whom are themselves Travellers), and with several Local Authority personnel and a local Councillor. This report has assembled and set out in detail the many roles that horses have played within Traveller life, and the many areas of Traveller culture of which horses are a part.

The original uses of horses

There is no memory of the Traveller community without horses.

The original and fundamental role of horses for the community was a practical one: to pull Travellers' wagons and carts. Many middle-aged Travellers today have childhood memories of moving about the country in horse-drawn wagons. Horses are also present in the oral histories of Traveller families.

"We lived at the side of the road in camps and we always had horses... They were transport."
– Traveller man.

"Down through the years with the Travelling community, it was always a tradition for them to keep horses, always."
–Traveller man.

"The horses fed us years ago because we could get up on a pony and cart and go out the country when we had nothing, when we had no dole or no money or nothing... The horse was part of, it was just like a brother or sister because the horse would help us and we'd help the horse."
– Traveller woman.

Unsurprisingly, horses are even part of 'origin' stories of Travellers.

One origin story recounts that at least one Traveller family were the horse keepers for the Kings of Ui Maine in Connacht. Other, more prosaic origin stories are related to being displaced from the land.

"You see our problem is the time when the landlords came into our country and raided our homes so we had to take to the highways and byways, and what happened there is we had the horse, the horse reared us, it is in our bloodstream going back to my grandmother's time and her father's time."
– Traveller man.

Horses were the principal vehicle by which Travellers became Travellers. The horse was a working animal, but it was also a constant companion and a member of the Travelling community. As sentient beings with personalities, horses were more than passive tools, and many Travellers had emotional attachments to their horses

"There is no memory of the Traveller community without horses."



Economic activities

Travellers have engaged in several economic activities that are connected to horses.

Horse trading: Travellers have long been known as horse traders and their presence was expected at horse fairs (Bhreatnach, 2006). Other travelling communities, such as the Hungarian Romani or "Gypsy-Travellers" in the United Kingdom, have also strongly been identified with horse trading, from both within and outside the community (Holloway 2003, Stewart 1997).

Horse fairs remain important events, with social functions that have grown organically from Travellers' economic connections to horses. Travellers from across regions gather at horse fairs; they engage not only in transactions, but also in social conversation. Horse fairs are distinctly family outings to which children are often brought (there were numerous specific references to bringing children over the course of the interviews). Larger fairs – those at Borris and Ballinasloe would be the prime examples – draw visitors from across the country and beyond. One interviewee mentioned meeting both Travellers and settled people from England, Scotland, Wales, France and even America. Fairs also serve as social events, where Travellers engage social circles broader than their own families, and seek out opportunities for all kinds of networking, including matchmaking.

Breeding: Travellers would often breed or sell foals, and many still do. For some, this was a primary income activity; for others, it was an occasional supplement to income.

"We had a Connemara pony years ago that used to have foals... and you could sell them for maybe £100 or £200 at that time and maybe £300 if they were good foals. But then we'd be keeping all that money for the winter."
– Traveller woman, Co. Galway]

Most significantly, Travellers are credited with the rearing of the Irish Coloured Cob, also known as the "Irish Traveller horse," a specific breed of horse related to a Romanichal horse.

Farm labour: Travellers with experience with horse keeping often translated that knowledge into casual labour on the farms of settled Irish, looking after horses and other livestock.

Tourism: Tourist-related activities such as cart or pony rides and pictures used to be a part of Traveller livelihoods. This was often a seaside activity, when a collar and shawl would be put on a horse and it would be taken down to the beach to give cart or pony rides to children, and pictures would be taken. Travellers report this trade is now rarely practiced

ATT ACH MENT

Raising horses, building bonds

The link between Travellers and horses is far from a purely utilitarian relationship, and should not be portrayed as only economic. There are strong social and emotional relationships between Travellers and the horses they care for, and the care of horses has been a central part of strong family and community relationships.

Many Traveller men speak of keeping horses as companions, for their own personal enjoyment and for sharing with their children and grandchildren.

"I strictly keep them just for breeding and sentimental value more or less than anything, you know what I mean?"
– Traveller man.

"They are pets... We like to look at them and bring the kids with them and we enjoy them."
–Traveller man.

Horses provide opportunities for intrafamilial bonding, especially (though not exclusively) between a father and son. The regularity of the daily routine, and the opportunities for teaching and guiding it brings, is *"like a bonding tool between fathers and sons."* Horses are often given as a gift at a very young age; the child has the opportunity *"to grow up with the horse and it is their horse."*
– Support worker.

While the keeping and care of horses is largely a part of Traveller men's life, it is not exclusively so, and the significance of horses is for all Travellers. A support worker recalls a Traveller woman at a meeting in Co. Kilkenny emphasizing, *"'Okay, while it is the men's occupation, it is really, really important to Travellers as a whole, including us women... It is part of my culture even though I may not be actively involved in the horse care.'"*

Some Traveller women have also raised horses; one Traveller man interviewed remembered, *"My granddad gave one to my mother as a present"* –Traveller man, and gave his daughter's baby a yearling at birth, which the grandfather cares for. Another man gave his four year-old daughter a miniature horse, which she was already learning to feed" –Traveller man and child.

This daily care of horses is effectively a form of training given to Traveller youth, and it provides good preparation for employment. This is especially true for young men, who are most likely to be involved in horse care and are also the most likely to encounter challenges in finding employment. Daily work with a sentient, living being has meant that young men received a training that could be used for other employment; this includes direct skills of use in a stable or on a farm, for example, as well as related trades such as carpentry, when horse boxes and sheds would be built on site. An equally important facet of this activity is simply that it assists in developing more broadly applicable skills, such as punctuality, responsibility, discipline, and an understanding of the value of work.

"Like I have grown up since I was a child with dogs and horses. I worked for twenty years on a farm, looking after stock for various people – and how I ended up paying for my education. I used to get up every morning at six and milk by hand twelve cattle and go down and eat the breakfast and go to school. Come home and go back up in the evening and do it all over. It was twice a day, every day, 365 days a year."
– Traveller man.

In addition to the benefits with regard to finding employment, the keeping of horses is a positive activity for young men in a behavioral sense. Historically, keeping horses has kept young men close to their families and their culture, and generally kept them *'out of trouble.'* This was raised repeatedly as a means of navigating hazards – faced by young men in particular – of anti-social behaviour, crime, and substance abuse. The Smithfield Horse Fair, for example, which used to be held on the first Sunday of every month, also helped to occupy young men when they were not in school.

Similarly, one man remembers how the care of horses discouraged nights out on the town: *"...if I ended up going down there in the bar, how long would it last? Wake up with a headache in the morning and knowing that you still had to go feeding—it don't work."*
– Traveller man.

Some connect the powerful bond or "friendship" that develops between a horse and its caregiver to the positive impact it can have on young men's behavior: *"[T]hey are better to have an interest in the horses concerning trouble-wise, do you know what I am saying? [Without horses] there is a good possibility that they might go into the city and get mixed up in bad gangs and then they finish up dead or go to prison... If a kid gets interested in [horses], it is not something he will throw away tomorrow... The horse is a good friend."* *– Traveller man.*

Over the course of these interviews, comments along the lines of "horses were his life" were commonplace. Some Traveller women described men looking after their horses 'like children,' babying and coddling them. The stories show their deep commitment to their animals, and the bond it creates between human and animal. For example, there were several stories of how Travellers would stay out in the field all night with a horse that was sick or pregnant.

One man spoke of caring for a sick mare who wouldn't eat: *"I used to go up five times a day with the ration, and I'd nearly get it by hand and put it into her mouth."*

Later, he finally asked his vet to put the mare down: *"And when he was giving her the injection I was standing there like a baby, crying."– Traveller man.*

The relationships with horses are not only individual. The arrival of new foals, for example, is an exciting event for the whole community. The social importance given to horses within a family and a wider community also gives Travellers a collective sense of pride and emotional attachment.

Cultural symbolism and identity

While not every Traveller family keeps horses, Travellers repeatedly emphasized the centrality of horses in Traveller culture. Related discussions about "culturally appropriate" accommodation always include the need for sufficient and appropriate space for keeping horses. For families that have always kept horses, being without them is unimaginable. Horses are tightly woven into their identity and sense of community: *"You're not Travellers if you don't."*
– Traveller woman.

As another put it, not keeping horses *"is like you saying I can't wear my boots, I am going walking on glass." – Traveller man.*

The same source spoke of another Traveller man whose horses are being impounded: *"He can't afford to get them out, they will probably keep those horses now. He will probably hang himself. I mean that, I am not joking you, he was crying over it."*
– Traveller man.

The care of horses has fostered a sense of collectivism and unity amongst Irish Travellers, such that horses could even belong to several families. One horse in particular, "Lion King," a shared cultural touchstone among the Traveller community, particularly in the West. *"If you go to Ballinasloe Fair you will see his photograph on the cars and the Jeeps and all."*
– Traveller man.

Indeed, as a basic conversational staple between strangers, to ask how many horses your father or husband had was as commonplace among Travellers as 'how are you?'

There has long been a broad public association of Travellers with horses. Travellers themselves would reinforce this in many ways. When they were still travelling with their horses, there would at times be communal 'rides' to bring horses from one town to another. One woman remembers at the age of ten being one of three riders on such a journey to herd thirty horses. It has been an important aspect of their public identity and pride. Many Travellers would not go into a town without a horse.

Horses are also at the centre of a public form of recreation, horse racing, and in particular, 'racing trotters' on the road. Horses would race with a two-wheeled cart (or "sulky") and race at a trot. The proceeds of entering a horse would often be given to charity.

In addition to associations with the actual animal, the symbol of the horse is a commonly-used and recognized symbol for Travellers. This symbol is both an expression of identity and a signifier of property or territory. Travelling community organizations use symbols of horses (such as a horse, horse's head, horseshoe or wagon) in their logos. Horse imagery is also commonly found on Traveller headstones. Used horseshoes are hung as decoration and horseshoes has been a common game amongst Travellers, though today it is often not permitted on halting sites.



Some Travellers place horse-head capstones on pillars at the gateway to their homes, and many have said that to see a horse sculpture – or similar marker – outside a home signifies a Traveller household. This enables Travellers to mark their territory, and be visible to each other, even if it is a technique not recognized by settled people. As well, even families who do not keep the live animal commonly have pictures and figurines of horses in their homes.

In public and private identities, Travellers mark themselves individually and collectively by their associations with horses. Both the animal and symbols of the animal are deeply embedded in Traveller culture and identity.

Mental Health

Horses have a significant impact on mental health, especially with regard to older men. This is particularly pertinent since the rate of suicide amongst Traveller men is six times that of the settled Irish community, and there has been a substantial increase over the last ten years. This disturbing trend led to the establishment in 2004 of a National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project, and a funded project by the same name that ran from 2007-2010.

The Travellers' Health Matters report, commissioned by the Galway Traveller Movement in April 2009, documented personal accounts of horses as central to mental well-being. One man interviewed for the report said,

"Here I can keep my horses... what keeps me sane... and share traditions with my children... the best thing about Carrowbrowne is that there is land to keep animals, something we could not do on a council estate." (Pg. 30)

The latter point is of note: the keeping of horses is one form of cultural and economic activity that can take place on a halting site (although often disallowed), but is rarely viable in social housing schemes.

There are other references to the significance of keeping horses in the Travellers' Health Matters report:

- "The location of the site was cited by families as contributing to their ability (particularly in the case of the men) to engage in economic (recycling of materials) and cultural activity (maintenance of horses and animals), and both were perceived to have positive health impacts and to enhance well-being." (p. 37)
- "Families also report that crime levels are low and that their ability to undertake cultural activity on the site (for example, horse care) promotes cohesion and reduces the risk of young people engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour." (p. 40)

This importance of horses to Travellers from the perspective of mental well-being is not confined to impressions and anecdotal evidence; it is in fact supported by general scholarly research in psychology. Both "Western" and "non-Western" research support the findings that connections with horses have an experiential authenticity that is grounding and engaging, calling it "an alternative space of shared meaning and understanding" (Dell et al. 2011, 330; see also Yorke 2008).

Working with farm animals has positively impacted people with mental health issues, including serious afflictions, and this effect has been documented by research (Berget et al. 2008; Pederson et al. 2011). For example, several projects for veterans with Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder specifically use horses for therapeutic purposes:

"Unlike with many dogs, who trust unconditionally, horses require humans to work to gain their trust." (MacLean 2011, x)

Horses have also been used in animal-assisted therapy or equine-assisted learning for those recovering from substance abuse. Similar forms of equine therapy also have broader functions in occupational therapy.

One of the areas in which equine-assisted therapy has been particularly successful, with positive resonances into the community, is in situations where horses have a significant place in the culture of those being treated. For example, a study of the use of equine-assisted learning with Inuit and First Nations youth in Canada (Dell et al. 2011) demonstrated that culturally specific knowledge may be critical to healing. Given the significant cultural and symbolic roles of horses in Traveller society, it is reasonable to assume the presence of horses in preventing and treating mental health challenges would be a successful strategy for Travellers.

New challenges and the loss of horses

Although there had been some tensions over Traveller horse keeping in earlier decades (Helleiner, 2001), the 1996 Control of Horses Act, in conjunction with other policies regarding Travellers' accommodation and nomadic practices, has intensified these tensions and introduced greater restrictions. The keeping of horses has many challenges, one of which is financial.

It should be noted that horses themselves are not necessarily expensive: one interviewee reported, *"Horses are very cheap now; you can buy a horse for €50 to €100."* – *Traveller man.*

Furthermore, although there are disagreements over this, many feel stabling needs are minimal as well. One man suggested that *"the only horse you would really have to house is thoroughbreds and Irish draft – all year round they are cold-looking."* – *Traveller man.*

However, the increased cost of keeping (and licensing) horses, and retrieving them from impoundment, has a serious financial impact and brings tension to a household.

One of the biggest challenges, and costs, is finding suitable land. In some instances it may be possible to use a farmer's field, post-harvest, at minimal or no cost. While this is a positive arrangement financially, it means constant negotiation and reorganization of access to land. There is also a necessity for frequent moves, and these tend to stress both animal and owner. One Traveller man reported an arrangement he had at one point where he was keeping one horse in one place, and a second horse elsewhere: *"It was a lot of hassle, a lot of grief..."* – *Traveller man.*

Another described an arrangement he knew of, where a man with 80 horses was keeping them in five different places. For a good arrangement to be established successfully with some durability, usually requires a personal relationship between the Traveller and landowner or someone with the Local Authority in order to besuccessfully established.

Food is another significant cost. *"A roll of hay is €25 and that would only last maybe a week."* – *Traveller man.*

Again, positive relationships can assist; one example given was of a farmer who allowed a man access to feed. *"It gets harder and harder to get grazing for the simple reason that nobody likes to let a horse into his land. A horse is similar to a sheep: it never stops eating."* – *Traveller man.*

Should a horse require veterinary care for a serious injury or ailment, this is a further significant cost.

The Control of Horses Act stipulated that Local Authorities have the power to dictate that horses only be allowed in designated "Control Areas" and that in such areas horses also must be licensed. The Act created serious expense for horseowners, and serious consequences for violation. If a horse has been detained on two or more occasions within the previous twelve months, the Local Authority may decide to dispose of the horse. After an offense, a person may also be forbidden from keeping a horse. Horses may be seized, and the Act also provides for large fines, summary and indictable convictions, and imprisonment up to two years. Local Authorities may set their own fines.

Following EU regulation in 2015 aimed at greater security of the food chain, the Irish government passed legislation that requires all horses to be identified, microchipped and issued with a lifetime passport that should always accompany them. This legislation took effect in February 2016.

Another more progressive method of control are "horse strategies," one of which has been successfully established in Tralee; several others are under consideration by Local Authorities. These are efforts by Traveller organizations and councils to set aside an area designated for Travellers to keep horses and through which a council may regulate the number of horses kept.

The most extreme measure for the control of horses is seizure and impoundment. Some media coverage as well as anecdotal evidence from around the country indicates seizure is becoming more common. In one dramatic 2011 example from Loughrea, Co. Galway, eleven horses were removed from the field and taken to a pound in Kilkenny, approximately 130 km away, or more than two hours' drive. The sudden seizure of these horses came after 40 years of using the same field, which was adjacent to the group housing scheme of the owners. A similar example occurred on the morning of a March 21, 2013 national seminar on Traveller horse ownership hosted by the Cork Traveller Visibility Group and the Cork city Horse Forum (a multi-agency group), when 25 horses were impounded, after the seizure of 13 the previous week, mostly from the Traveller community (Horgan 2013; English 2013).

Travellers find there is fierce resistance to their efforts to keep horses. In some instances, the wish to keep horses on a halting site has led to conflict in a previously positive relationship with the local authorities. In Co. Tipperary, for example, the development of one permanent halting site (where a temporary site had been) emerged from a highly cooperative consultation. However, when Traveller men built sheds for their horses on the site, the Council refused to grant planning permission and the positive relationship collapsed.

The increased costs, penalties and restrictions associated with keeping horses have reduced the number of horses kept by Travellers. Most who are able to continue to keep horses rely on personal relationships and ad hoc arrangements, and many of those arrangements are only barely manageable for the caretakers and barely adequate for the horses. Often, the necessary arrangements are not financially or logistically possible, and Travellers are not able to keep their horses. Sometimes, as noted above, existing arrangements are suddenly ended. The resulting loss of horses is felt by the individual caretakers and by Travellers as a community.

Conclusions

Horses have played many roles in Traveller life: practical, economic, social, emotional, cultural and symbolic. Travellers speak of being "drawn" to horses, noticing them on television, and following stories about them. They underpin much of Traveller culture, identity and day-to-day life. They have enriched the lives of individuals, created bonds to link generations, and connected disparate families into a community. There is no history of Travellers without horses, no expression of Traveller identity without horses.

Therefore, measures introduced by the Irish government to control the keeping of horses – the restrictions on the keeping of horses, the lack of provision to keep them on halting sites or within the space of group housing schemes (or immediately adjacent), and in extreme cases the seizure of horses – all have a significant impact on Traveller life. They have made it more difficult to keep horses and that loss has many wake effects.

As a support worker from Co. Kilkenny notes, this policy is short-sighted:... *"If you continue the policy of oppression, if you take away cultural expression like that, fifteen years down the road you will be reinventing something like that and calling it a diversion project."*

The unique cultural relationships between Travellers and horses, and the shared language and symbols arising from those relationships, reinforce identity in a collective and solidaristic manner. This solidarity is a critical need for marginalized communities facing discrimination, as Travellers do. Horses specifically connect to Traveller history, and this connection fosters an earned sense of pride.

The increased control and lack of accommodation for horses is not simply an economic regulation or logistical headache for Travellers. The many regulations and restrictions that make keeping horses difficult or impossible have torn the fabric of Traveller life and identity. It would greatly enhance the well-being of Travellers, in several specific and measureable ways, to keep horses in the immediate environs of their residence.

References

Berget, B., Ø. Ekeberg, B. Braastad. (2008). Animal-Assisted Therapy with Farm Animals for Psychiatric Disorders: Effects on Self-Efficacy, Coping Ability and Quality of Life, A Randomized Controlled Trial, Clinical Practice & Epidemiology in Mental Health, 4, 1-7.

Bhreatnach, A. (2006). Becoming Conspicuous: Irish Travellers, Society and the State, 1922-70. Dublin: University College Dublin Press.

Dell, C., D. Chalmers, N. Bresette, S. Swain, D. Rankin, C. Hopkins, 2011. A Healing Space: The Experiences of First Nations and Inuit Youth with Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL). Child & Youth Care Forum. 40(4), 319-36.

English, E. (2013). Land and horse owners told they face prosecution in crackdown. Irish Examiner, March 21. Available at: http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/land-and-horse-owners-told-they-face-prosecution-in-crackdown-226037.html

Geraghty, D. (2011). Council warns it will seize more 'trespassing' horses. The Connaght Tribune, May 6.

Helleiner, J. (2000). Irish Travellers: Racism and the politics of culture. Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press.

Holloway, S. L. (2003). Outsiders in rural society? Constructions of rurality and nature – society relations in the racialisation of English Gypsy-Travellers, 1869 - 1934. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 21(6), 695–715.

Holmes, C., Goodwin, D., Redhead, E., & Goymour, K. (2012). The Benefits of Equine -Assisted Activities: An Exploratory Study. Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal 29(2), 111-122.

Horgan, P. (2013). Horse seminar to address neglect fears. Cork Independent, February 21. Available at: http://corkindependent.com/20130221/news/horse-seminar-to-address-neglect-fears-S59999.html

MacLean, B. (2011). Equine-Assisted Therapy. Journal of Rehabilitation Research. 48(7), ix-xii.

O'Callaghan, D.M. & Chandler, C.K. (2011). An Exploratory Study of Animal-Assisted Interventions Utilized by Mental Health Professionals. Journal of Creativity in Mental Health. 6(2), 90-104.

Pederson, I., Nordaunet, T., Martinsen, E.W., Berget, B. & Braastad, B.O. (2011). Farm Animal-Assisted Intervention: Relationship between Work and Contact with Farm Animals and Change in Depression, Anxiety, and Self-Efficacy Among Persons with Clinical Depression. Issues in Mental Health Nursing. 32(8), 493-500.

Rothe, E.Q., Vega, J., Torres, R.M., Soler, S.M.C., & Pazos, R.M.M. (2005). From Kids and Horses: Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy for Children. International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology, 5(2), 373-383.

Stewart, M. (1997). In the time of Gypsies. Boulder: Westview Press.

Travellers' Health Matters. (2009). A retrospective health impact assessment of low-grade Traveller accommodation conducted by the Galway Traveller Movement and funded by Combat Poverty Agency, Ireland.

Yorke, J., Adams, C. & Coady, N. (2008). Therapeutic Value of Equine-Human Bonding in Recovery from Trauma. Anthrozoos, 21(10), 17-30.

Key recommendations

- Policies imposed by the majority regarding accommodation and horses have had unintended consequences for the minority Traveller community. The negative impact of these policies demands attention and remediation in order to preserve both the well-being of Travellers and animal welfare interests.
- Accommodation programmes should include support for the ownership and keeping of horses.
- The impact of the loss of horses on mental health needs to be taken very seriously. Where possible, horses and horse culture should be included in mental health programmes, for both older and younger generations.
- Better protocols need to be established for horse seizure: advance notice should be required, seizure should be a last resort, and the process for reclamation of animals should be clear and accessible.

Acknowledgements

The research for this report was supported by a grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Thanks to everyone who agreed to speak with the author about their knowledge and experience.



Imagery: All photos are by the author and all are of Traveller horses.