Original Article

# The campaign for a National Strategy for Gypsy site provision and the role of Public Health activism in the 1960–1970s

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**Abstract** We trace the post-war evolution of a national approach to providing caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers — something essential to protect the health of that population in the United Kingdom (UK). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the late Norman Dodds MP championed in Parliament the plight of the UK's Gypsies and other nomads. He was instrumental in galvanising support for the 1968 Caravan Sites Act. The vision of influential individuals working in public and environmental health surmounted practical considerations and local opposition to implement the national programme of site provision envisioned by the Act. We detail this hitherto neglected aspect of Gypsy politics and policy development. In doing so, we highlight the transformative potential of public health and argue for a return to the comprehensive vision motivating these pioneers in the 1960s and 1970s.

**Keywords:** Gypsies; Travellers; Norman Dodds MP; caravan sites; public health

## Introduction

We discuss the pioneering efforts of Norman Dodds MP for a coordinated approach to providing caravan sites for 'Gypsies' and 'Travellers' in the UK and we describe the determination of public and environmental health officers who often, in face of local entrenched opposition, were instrumental in driving forward this strategy. The creation of caravan sites has been essential for protecting the health of

this population. Defining Gypsies and Travellers is not an easy task—nor is there full agreement on definitions. Thus, we provide what we believe to be the most useful definitional information from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Police Association (GRTPA) in Text Box 1. We also define 'Caravan site provision'. We will use the term 'Gypsy' below to connote Gypsies and Travellers.

## Text Box 1

*Glossary of terms*

***Gypsy*** The stereotyping label of 'Egyptian' was attached to the early Indian immigrant population in Anatolia who consolidated the Romani language in the 11th century. When they reached Western Europe in the 15th century, they often used the term to describe themselves. Variants in other European countries include Kipti, Yifti Gyupsi, Copti. It is different from the more derogatory term Tsigani, derived from a Greek word for "Heretic". Many west European Romani groups still sometimes use these terms as a self-appellation, but many regard them as derogatory. Some Balkan groups, however, insist they are Egyptian not Roma.

***Rom/Roma/Romani/Romany/Romanies*** This is a Romani word that originally meant human or humane. It was probably adopted as an ethnonym in the early Ottoman Empire because from the 14th century "Roman" also gave a claim to the juridical status of former Byzantine citizenship. Also, under persecution in 16th century western Europe, it became a self-referential word for people who behaved and spoke properly. Many Romani speaking groups now use it as an ethnonym, as well a term of moral affirmation. Only around 10 per cent of the Romani population has ever been nomadic in the past 500 years, but the proportion is much higher in the smaller west European groups.[1–3]

***Traveller*** This term refers to commercial nomads, or those of commercial nomadic heritage as well as those who are Romani. There are other localised mixed groups like the Irish Travellers, the Jenish in Alsace, the Woonwagenbewoner in the Netherlands, who consolidated during the persecution of vagrants in the 16th century, and have their own secret languages, often influenced by Romani.

***Romani Studies*** This is an inter-disciplinary field of academic studies focused on the history, culture, and experiences of the Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers.

***Caravan site provision/site provision/provision*** This refers to caravan sites provided by the local government authority. These generally adhered to minimum standards stipulated in the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act with respect to dimensions of caravans, maximum density and spacing of caravans, the provision of sanitary facilities, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment.

For a more detailed discussion of the terms Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller please refer to the Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association website at http://www.grtpa.com/mythbusting.

Roma probably immigrated to the British Isles in the late 15th century. From the mid-16th century, they became, along with Jews and Africans, the victims of Tudor and Stuart race-based expulsion measures, and

when these did not work, the subject of genocidal laws. They survived by hiding their ethnicity, making common cause with local commercial nomads, and gaining local aristocratic patronage. By the late 17th century, the British Isles had distinct commercial nomadic populations in each of its four countries, each mixing local and immigrant Romani/Indian culture in different ways. They are identifiable today as the English and Welsh Gypsies, each with their own distinct linguistic mixture. We use the word 'Gypsy' here to cover all these populations.

The onset of industrialisation in Britain from the late 1700s and the move towards a modern urban society impacted the Gypsy population in several ways. Gypsies were increasingly seen as a dangerous class. A drive by rural police forces to remove Gypsy tents and waggons from the countryside, combined with the burgeoning opportunities in towns and cities, led to a more urban and settled existence for many of the country's nomadic population by the late 19th century. Legislation designed to prohibit or restrict camping, such as the Turnpike Roads Act 1822, Vagrancy Act 1824, and Highways Act 1835 along with enclosure of common lands and the loss of many traditional 'atching tans' (stopping places) made an itinerant lifestyle increasingly difficult. Public health and environmental health legislation, such as the Public Health Act 1891, also impacted the lives of Gypsies and 'van dwellers' by granting local authorities powers to adopt by-laws relating to public health risks and various 'nuisances'. Section 95 of the 1891 Act gave local inspectors powers to inspect tents, vans, and sheds used for living and to prosecute those who failed to make sanitary improvements if these were deemed necessary. These pressures, which had been building up through the 19th and early 20th centuries, intensified in the post-World War II era, and eventually led to the first piece of legislation giving local authorities a statutory duty to provide caravan sites for Gypsies living in or passing through their jurisdictions.

Four factors contributed to radical changes in United Kingdom (UK) Gypsy policy during the 1960s and 1970s. First, a land shortage, exacerbated by planning discrimination against caravan site provision (hereinafter 'site provision' or 'provision'), culminated in the 1960 Caravan Sites (Control of Development) Act (pp. 140–149).[1] Second, from 1947, resistance by Gypsy/Traveller community leaders and their sympathisers led to the foundation of the Gypsy Council in 1966. (A campaign was led by the Gypsy Wisdom Smith and Ellen Wilmot-Ware.) The third factor was the contribution of politicians who stuck their heads

above the parapet to champion the Gypsies: Norman Dodds, Member of Parliament (M.P), was the pioneer; Eric Lubbock M.P, who became Lord Avebury, the most prominent. The fourth and much neglected contribution is that of Public Health Inspectors (on the cusp of becoming Environmental Health Officers) who, following Dodds' lead, made the building of caravan sites feasible and sustainable. We shall look at how Dodds' early efforts provided an impetus for Ken Jolley of Bullingdon Rural District Council, and Don Byrne of Hemel Hempstead Borough Council, and subsequently for the UK Government's Department of the Environment (DoE), without whom a sustainable system of local authority Traveller caravan sites would never have been rolled out.

Dodd's campaign occurred in two main periods, the early 1950s and the early 1960s. Both ended in failure, but the second carried with it seeds of hope. At the Parliamentary level, throughout the period, Dodds was a persistent advocate of Gypsy rights. His posthumously published book *Gypsies, Didikois and other Travellers* (1966) was one of the first post-war publications to provide a comparative analysis of the situation of Gypsies and government policies in Britain and other European countries.[4] He outlined the dual impacts of modernity and legislation on Gypsies and other caravan dwellers, and the human costs. Although significant legislative reform materialised only after his death in 1965, his campaign, to publicise the Gypsy cause, establish a national evidence base, and implement a coordinated approach to site accommodation, was fundamental in shaping a national response to the "Gypsy problem".

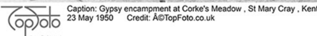
## Methods

We undertook a narrative review of primary sources (*Hansard* proceedings from the Houses of Commons and Lords between 1950 and 1970, Government reports, and Circulars) and secondary literature. This approach allowed for a contextual and critical analysis of the efforts of Dodds and his successors. We also draw on one of the authors (Acton) acquaintance with individuals mentioned in this article and his involvement in Gypsy politics and activism from the 1960s onwards.

## Gypsy politics and social policy in post-war Britain

The Erith and Crayford constituencies that elected Dodds as a Labour Member of Parliament (M.P.) in 1945 contained within their

boundaries the Gypsy camp at Belvedere Marshes on the edges of South East London and Kent. Gypsies had occupied the land since the 19th century and theirs was the largest Gypsy population in the country, fluctuating between 500 and 1700 residents. Dodds visited the site in 1947 and several times thereafter; these early experiences on Belvedere Marshes and at other nearby camps such as Corke's Meadow at St. Mary Cray (Figure One) convinced him of the crucial importance of a social survey to "(ascertain) the size of the problem, if we are ever to find a solution of a situation for which we must all bear a measure of guilt" (p. 37).[4] Along with William Larmour of the London City Mission, the evangelist Ernest "Gypsy" Williams, and prominent Kent Gypsies such as Jim Lewis and Will "Dromengro" Smith, Dodds formed a Gypsy Committee that produced a nine-point "Gypsy Charter". This included a national survey of Gypsies and other travellers; a network of sites with 'adequate' (in terms of the 1960 Act, below) sanitation facilities; and a strategy for educating Gypsy children and providing vocational training for adults.




Caption: Gypsy encampment at Corke's Meadow , St Mary Cray , Kent
23 May 1950 Credit: Â©TopFoto.co.uk

Anti-Gypsy sentiment ran high at the time, led by the Association of Rural District Councils that was petitioning the UK Government's Home Office (the department responsible for domestic security, law and order, and immigration) to restrain Gypsies from moving from one camping spot to another and to prevent farmers from leasing them their land (p. 139).[1] Dodds requested Parliamentary time for a debate on 20 April 1951 where he argued for central government action and prompted George Lindgren, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government and Planning, to receive a delegation of Gypsies. The Labour Government agreed to carry out a national survey following Dodds' pursuit of the issue, but after Labour lost the General Election in 1951, the survey never took place. His tenacity in questioning Ministers and arguing for a survey persuaded Harold Macmillan, then Housing Minister, to pursue a smaller survey conducted in Kent in 1951–1952. The results suggested that most of those surveyed in Kent were not "true Gypsies" because they would be likely to drift back into conventional housing — once the government had built enough. This political support helped Macmillan become the most prolific house-building minister ever!

At the same time, Ellen Wilmot-Ware, a tenant farmer, launched a personal crusade against the local authorities for prosecuting and evicting the Gypsies whom she permitted to camp on her land. She combined forces with the Gypsy Wisdom Smith in Gloucestershire but their campaign staggered towards defeat under repeated fines and the threat of imprisonment. She pleaded for support from Dodds, who was unwilling to condone civil disobedience or breaking the law. Wisdom Smith and the Gypsies fled, and Ellen Wilmot-Ware defiantly went to prison, until, like Soviet dissidents of the same era, she was transferred to a psychiatric hospital.[5]

By the time Harold Macmillan became Prime Minister in 1957, it was generally accepted in political circles that the answer to 'the Gypsy problem' and 'the rash of caravan sites' was planning control plus more housing. Out of 250,000 caravan dwellers in the UK, approximately 150,000 (60,000 households) were not Gypsies but driven to caravan dwelling due to insufficient housing supply. Sir Arton Wilson's (1959) Report, *Caravans as Homes,* noted that a key problem was a lack of legislative clarity on caravan dwelling that gave neither local authorities nor planning authorities the power to regulate it. His report showed that most lived in squalid conditions on private sites with

overcrowding common and often lacking in adequate toilet and washing facilities or clean water.[6] Population estimates for Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma have proven and still prove to be notoriously problematic. The 2011 Census recorded only 58,000 people identifying as Romani or Traveller — far fewer than those living on Gypsy caravan sites.[7] The Irish Traveller Movement, in Britain's *Gypsy and Traveller population in England and the 2011 census,* used a different methodology and estimated a Traveller population of 120,000[8], while a Council of Europe publication (2012) *Roma and Travellers,* estimated the UK's population at between 150 and 300,000.[9]

The 1960 Caravan Sites (Control of Development) Act set minimum standards for all existing caravan sites, whether used by Gypsies, other caravan dwellers, or holidaymakers. Despite Dodd's insistence on a national approach, the 1960 Act established a discretionary mechanism for local authorities to license sites and to decide what measures were appropriate.[10] Under the 1960 Act, a caravan refers to "any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another" or any motor vehicle designed for the purpose of habitation.[11] The Act gave local authorities powers to control the size, type, and state of repair of caravans stationed on licensed sites. It detailed conditions relating to the spacing of caravans (a minimum of 6 metres apart), density (maximum 50 caravans per hectare) and fire prevention, and set minimum standards for sites covering the provision of sanitary facilities, drainage, washing facilities, and water supply. Each caravan was to be provided a concrete base on which to park caravans (to avoid mud) and a refuse bin for rubbish, and one-tenth of the site area was to be devoted for recreational purposes (p. 133).[12] The 1960 Act also made it virtually impossible for private developers to build any new sites. Despite the availability of central government funds, local authorities were slow to respond. By 1967, only 14 local authority sites had been built.[13]

## The development of a national approach to Gypsy site provision

Two factors mitigated the difficulties faced by many travelling Gypsies due to the diminishing supply of camping grounds in the 1950s. The first one was the switch from horses to motors; one could motor 200 miles between stopping places rather than travelling 20 by horse-drawn

waggon, so fewer camping sites were needed. The second one was the slow growth of private sites accepting or owned by Gypsies. The visionary and influential Tom Smith of Bloxham (near Banbury opened) the most successful site. Smith was later President of the short-lived Romani Site-Owners' Guild, and grandfather of Jim Davies, co-founder of the Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association in 2014.

This slow growth of Gypsy landownership was stopped dead in its tracks by the 1960 Act. Planning authorities were restrictive in issuing site licences and Gypsies who camped on land that they owned or rented were subject to fines and prosecutions that pushed many onto the roadside. Once on the road, the controls against unauthorised camping introduced in the 1960 Act created privations, as the Gypsies were evicted from one roadside verge after another (p. 107).[14] The first clear analysis of the impending crisis came from a member of an emerging profession, the Public Health Inspectors, who were just beginning to take their own public discourse out of the faltering hands of the narrowly epidemiological Medical Officers of Health.[15] In 1961, A.H. Hayes used the professional journal *The Sanitarian* to state clearly that the answer was more caravan sites for Gypsies, not fewer (p. 422).[16]

Thus emboldened, Dodds resumed action in the winter of 1961–1962, taking up the case of 300 Gypsies facing eviction from a camp in Darenth Woods, near Dartford in Kent. In January 1962, he ensured maximum publicity by moving into a caravan with the Darenth Woods Gypsies. Dodd's vociferous Parliamentary campaigning and questioning on their behalf signalled the beginning of a shift in policy towards the more coordinated approach he had advocated for the previous decade. In February 1962, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government issued Circular 6/62 encouraging local authorities to conduct surveys and use their powers in the 1960 Act to build local authority caravan sites with hard-standing, electricity, running water, and separate toilet/washrooms, adhering to a set of minimum standards, stressing "the gravity of the situation instead of minimising it" (p. 149).[1]

Dodds continued the fight at national and local levels. The press covered the eviction at Darenth Woods extensively and "moved hundreds and thousands of people to indignation" (p. 69).[4] The eviction forced former residents to camp alongside the main Dover to London road (the A2) for 7 months; their presence elicited further sympathetic press coverage and kept the issue at the forefront of public

consciousness. Dodds lodged claims for damages to caravans and vehicles caused during the eviction and petitioned animal charities, seeking hay for delivery to the horses tethered alongside the A2. He led a march of 50 Gypsies to the National Assistance office in Dartford, as eviction had deprived many of their ability to work. Dodd also took up cases where assistance was (often wrongly) refused. He later supervised and, for 2 years from 1962 until its collapse in 1964, financially supported a site in Cobham, Kent for those evicted from Darenth Woods.

Dodds argued for an inter-departmental committee to consider the related issues of accommodation, education, employment, and health for Gypsies. In 1964, the new Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, forced Richard Crossman (Minister for Housing and Local Government and longstanding opponent of all caravan sites), to do something useful for the Gypsies to keep Dodds quiet (as Dodds saw it). The 'useful action' to quiet Dodds never materialised. Crossman did, however, acknowledge the need for information on numbers, travelling patterns, and distribution to devise effective policy, and ordered a census of the Gypsy and itinerant population.[17]

Dodds died in October 1965 before publication of the survey findings in Circular 26/66. The 1967 report *Gypsies and Other Travellers* again published these findings and concluded that a network of permanent and temporary sites needed to be developed.[18] Strong grassroots opposition in both Tory and Labour political parties persisted; Prime Minister Harold Wilson adroitly side-stepped it by offering government time and tacit support to Eric Lubbock, a Liberal MP for Orpington and Chairman of the National Campaign for Civil Liberty's (NCCL) Parliamentary Civil Liberties Group—if he would introduce the Caravan Sites Bill as a Private Member's Bill (a proposed bill or law introduced by an MP acting independently of his/her political party).

After amendments, this became the Caravan Sites Act 1968. It imposed a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and other travellers "residing in or resorting to" areas governed by each authority (pp. 19–22).[19] Adams et al. note that "The site provisions for the bill owed a great deal to the efforts of the late Norman Dodds and this was widely acknowledged at the second reading" (p. 17).[17] Although the 1968 Act ultimately fell short of meeting the demand for site provision, it was the first national attempt to improve the lives of those Dodds termed "Britain's outcasts and refugees" and to improve the squalid conditions

often endured by those “human shuttlecocks…an indictment of our system of local government” through national action (p. 102).[4]

## Implementing the 1968 Act: The role of Public and Environmental Health Officers

Dodds was instrumental in highlighting the Gypsies’ plight and shifting political opinion towards a national approach to site provision. Often, however, it was Environmental Health Officers who catalysed local site development. Even before implementation of the 1968 Act in 1970, Public Health Inspectors (soon to be re-named Environmental Health Officers) concerned themselves with the practical details of site provision, such as identifying suitable land, liaising with various departments of local government and contractors, and driving site development forward: that would enable Gypsy caravan sites to endure longer than Dodds’ Cobham experiment. In March 1967, Donald Byrne, a Public Health Inspector in Hemel Hempstead, threw professional caution to the winds to duplicate privately and circulate widely a pamphlet entitled: *A Matter of Public Interest: Mrs Connors and her eight young children.*[20]

This detailed the horrific tribulations of one family repeatedly evicted after being driven off of a disused cattle market in Oxford City where they had been camping due to a lack of alternative sites. The breach of a client’s anonymity alone by an Inspector could result in termination of his employment. But Byrne’s passion and barely controlled anger at the local authorities’ actions were unanswerable. Byrne was not fired, but promoted, and in September 1967 Hemel Hempstead Borough Council published a report by Hemel Hempstead’s Chief Public Health Inspector endorsing, albeit in more measured tones, Byrne’s conclusions.[21] Hertfordshire County Council later elevated Byrne to its County Council officer in charge of site provision.

In 1968, at the Association of Public Health Inspectors, members of the Gypsy Council spoke alongside Public Health Inspectors; Richard Wade served as spokesperson for the Gypsy Lore Society. The Association criticised the Gypsy Council unmercifully for being unrepresentative, radical, and including those who were not “true Gypsies” (pp 19–21).[22] All parties, however, strongly supported the (Eric) Lubbock Bill.

Although the 1968 Act took effect in 1970, little happened during the following 4 years of Prime Minister Edward Heath's Tory government, except where Public Health Inspectors initiated action, often in smaller districts. Bullingdon Rural District Council, for example, contained a disused construction-workers' depot and caravan site, named Slade Park. Members of the Bowers and Loveridge families and one or two Irish Travellers took refuge in Slade Park. Bullingdon's Senior Public Health Inspector, Ken Jolley, reacted with outrage (as had Don Byrne) to Oxford City Council's ruthless policy of forced eviction. Because there was no great support for Gypsy site provision among Bullingdon Councillors, Jolley determined to do something about it. He later explained to Acton his strategy: to look Oxford City Councillors in the eye sympathetically and explain that the law said they now had to provide sites, and they had to obey the law. He handled objections from the Department of Works and contractors expertly: he knew the building and planning regulations better than they did; he solved problems of drainage and road traffic access; he knew how to set up and manage tenancies, and to work out a realistic budget. He set out a more restrained version of his views in an article in the *Rural District Review*.[23] In a small rural authority, a Public Health Inspector could often evade opposition to his views. Even though Inspectors did not hold university qualifications, they had multi-disciplinary training. Thus, no one else in the authority could blind them with science, but with a little effort they could blind anyone else.

Between 1970 and 1974, re-organisation of local government by Prime Minister Heath's Conservative government amalgamated many smaller authorities, bringing many ambitious Public Health Inspectors onto a larger stage. It also re-named them Environmental Health Officers and started a process to make them a graduate profession.[24] Thames Polytechnic (later to become the University of Greenwich) started the second Honours Degree in Environmental Health (EH) in the UK. It hired an insurgent intellectual star of the new generation of Environmental Health Officers, David Chambers, to provide the professional input. One of the authors (Acton) collaborated with Chambers on research on the history of Public Health,[25] and Chambers was sympathetic to Acton's work in the then marginal area of Romani Studies. Not until many years later did Acton discover that Chambers was, himself, of Romani heritage.

Don Byrne appeared among the first professionals — those from outside the academic staff — to address the first cohort of EH students. In 1974, Prime Minister Harold Wilson's second Labour government had lured Byrne from Hertfordshire County Council to become the central Government DoE's resident expert on Gypsy sites. When this rather stooped and shambling, quietly spoken man in late middle-age, the very picture of an old-school Public Health Inspector, spoke to the students, he absolutely enthused them. He persuaded them, just as David Chambers did, that men and women of their breadth of practical knowledge could take over the world, at least the world of local government, and that national government could be a tool for doing so.

In the DoE in the late 1970s, Don Byrne made it so. As Okely reports (p. 114)'[14] he "supervised" the production of Sir John Cripps' (1976) report, *Accommodation for Gypsies;* his intervention meant it became very much in the interest of local authorities to provide Gypsy sites.[26] The Labour Government introduced 100 per cent grants for Gypsy site provision. Byrne effectively wrote Circular 28/77, explaining these grants[27] and toured the country doing what Ken Jolley had done in Bullingdon, looking councillors in the eye and telling them they had to obey the law — and that now the government would pay their councils to do so.

A sharp upswing in site provision ensued between 1977 and 1979, accompanied a rise in the rates of school attendance by Gypsy/Traveller children (pp. 47–62).[28] After 1979, Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government decided not to interfere, much, with a system that seemed to be working well. Even after Thatcher's government abolished the 100 per cent grants, local authorities provision of sites continued to drift slowly upwards until John Major's Conservative government decided that a return to anti-Gypsyism would attract voters. He repealed the 1968 Act in 1994.

Mary Waterson, the first field officer of the Advisory Council for the Education of Romanies and Travellers (ACERT), observed that Don Byrne improved Gypsy/Traveller education as a key part of his drive to promote and normalise local government authority caravan site provision; teachers were among those he encouraged and inspired.[29] Indeed, he died at a farewell party for Mary Waterson's successor as ACERT field officer. He was sitting on a chair, toppled sideways, and when they went to pick him up, he was dead. He was at the height of his success and influence.

The burgeoning intellectual confidence and authority of the Environmental Health profession did not long survive Don Byrne. There was no equivalent multi-disciplinary practice in most of the European Union (EU) and EU regulations imposed a mixture of veterinary and medical supervision on many of the Environmental Health Officers' duties. The traditional hierarchies of reified disciplinary and positivistic science were re-imposed and the impetus went out of Environmental Health. Thames Polytechnic became the University of Greenwich, and a new Vice-Chancellor from a traditional university with a great emphasis on classical disciplinary boundaries exiled the Environmental Health Officers to far-flung Chatham in Kent, where the course withered and died.

As Head of the School of Law and Social Sciences, Chambers (who was by now Professor of Romani Studies) became Acton's senior manager. One day Professor Chambers summoned Professor Acton to his office where Chambers explained that his mother was of Romani descent, and for her birthday wanted a "Gypsy treat" of some kind. Acton recommended that she go on one of the horse-drawn caravan day excursions organised by Gordon Boswell at the Spalding Romani Museum, which indeed she did, and reportedly greatly enjoyed it. It was only later that Acton reflected it might be odd that someone who was once a close colleague and friend did not choose to mention his own Romani heritage to a colleague viscerally engaged with Gypsy politics and research. Chambers himself obviously thought this unremarkable. Perhaps, it was obvious that if he had opened up about his ethnicity he might have also been forced into the role of eccentric outsider.

## Conclusion

This historic example of Gypsy caravan site provision offers a lesson in the potential for public health and environmental health in advancing a political and policy agenda for those whose needs may otherwise be neglected and overlooked. Although pressure for more site provision was also motivated by public disquiet at the 'Gypsy problem' after the rise in evictions and roadside encampments following the 1960 Act, what is clear is that when the Environmental Health profession enjoyed its brief intellectual and administrative flowering in the 1970s and 1980s, Gypsy/Traveller site provision also flourished.

The 1968 Act was only a partial success, however. In 1976, Sir John Cripps' report *Accommodation for Gypsies* found only one quarter of nomadic families were accommodated on 133 local authority sites (20 per cent of which had existed before the 1968 Act). Consistent undercounting of the Gypsy population by local authorities to minimise their site obligations and the tension between policies developed centrally and their local execution, manifested in trenchant local opposition to site development, meant the pace of site development was slow. Nevertheless, the combined efforts of political campaigning achieved the most important policy concession for Gypsies and other travellers to date. The determination and vision of public and environmental health professionals tasked with implementing a network of sites that accommodated over 45 per cent of the Gypsy population by the mid-1980s, often in the face of powerful resistance and foot dragging by local authorities, is noteworthy. By contrast, when less holistic and inter-disciplinary discussions took precedence, site provision faltered with the repeal of the 1968 Act in the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

Post-1994 has seen a return to anti-Gypsy legislation with progressively repressive measures against unauthorised camping, 'encouraging' (rather than compelling) local authorities to build caravan sites with an inevitable decline. Local authority sites accommodated 6807 caravans or 31 per cent of the total in January 2017. At the same time, *The Localism Act* in 2010 gave local authorities and communities a veto to block site development. For planning purposes, and when deciding 'appropriate' housing need, the act made Gypsy status conditional on being able to prove they still travel.[30] Critics regard this as a strategy to force more into housing, because a lack of sites and harsh penalties for unauthorised camping is a major reason that many cease caravan dwelling.[31]

Perhaps what is needed is a return to the political passion of M.Ps like Norman Dodds and Eric Lubbock and to the comprehensive vision of Public Health that animated Don Byrne and other catalysts of site provision. These pioneers championed the cause of one of society's least popular social groups — the treatment of whom former Czech President Vaclav Havel termed a 'litmus test' of civil society — and made possible not just the development of Gypsy sites, but the transformative nature of their discipline in the pursuit of social justice.

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