

The Grinding Bike

(suitable for KS2, KS3, KS4, staff)

A short video (6:21) of still photographs and voice over by Tom McCready about his discovery and recreation of an old grinding bike, a bike with a stand and a grinding wheel. These were traditionally used by Travellers to earn money by sharpening knives, tools and farm implements.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAG9dn5tFTc>

Possible discussion questions;

- What do you think a 'gorja' man is? (it's a Romany word that means a non-Traveller)
- Why was it important to the family that there was 'no outlay'?
- What was the grinding bike used for?
- Why don't Travellers use them now?
- Why did the family only have one bike chain?
- Tom describes a winter that his family were 'poverty stricken' and 'starving', how long ago do you think that happened?
- In what way do the pictures illustrate how Travellers' lives have changed in the last fifty years?