

Asking for: Courtship and Marriage

English Gypsies, Travellers, Romnichells, Irish Travellers and Welsh Travellers – today there’s not much difference between these groups, but in the past there were lots.

In the past, Romnichells never got ‘asked for’. They just ran away and got married. They were always married before nightfall. Some, in the past, over a hundred years ago, just took each other’s word, but were trued to each other all their years.

From the 1950s onwards, they get ‘asked for’ and married. Some have big wedding, some just family ones. The difference is because they have stopped among and married into Travellers’ families.

Extract from Customs, told by Clarice Evon at the Record Office



Margot: How did you meet your husband?

Maggie: It was on Appleby and because like I say me father was very old fashioned where boys and girls was concerned. You couldn’t like you know ... you couldn’t go with a boy and say, ‘Oh, I’m going with him.’ You couldn’t ... you couldn’t do nothing like that. So you had to do it on the sly. You know, so I met me husband on Appleby and it was the last day and then that was end of June and I never saw him no more ‘til the September and then I was with him on Doncaster races because you’d go from one place to another and we went together for about three year, maybe a bit more. And then he asked me daddy could we get married.



Maggie was married aged 24 at Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire.

I went to the Top Rank Dance when I was 19 and met Clarice. She didn’t appeal to me at first, but as we chatted and had things in common, I got to like her and we fell in love and I proposed outside the chip shop in Trethomas and again more romantically outside the Water Mill Restaurant Mill.

My dad was in Canada, and was calling me to go over to him. But I decided to get married instead. But never said who to!

Extract from Stephen’s story, told by Clarice for Records Office



Stephen Evon, a Wrom, with his parents and sister Pandy at her wedding.



Wedding party. Stephen’s Evon’s home in Liverpool. Woman in centre is a Gorgio.

Note gold chain with sovereigns for bride.