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# Ways of Remembering My Relatives

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Date

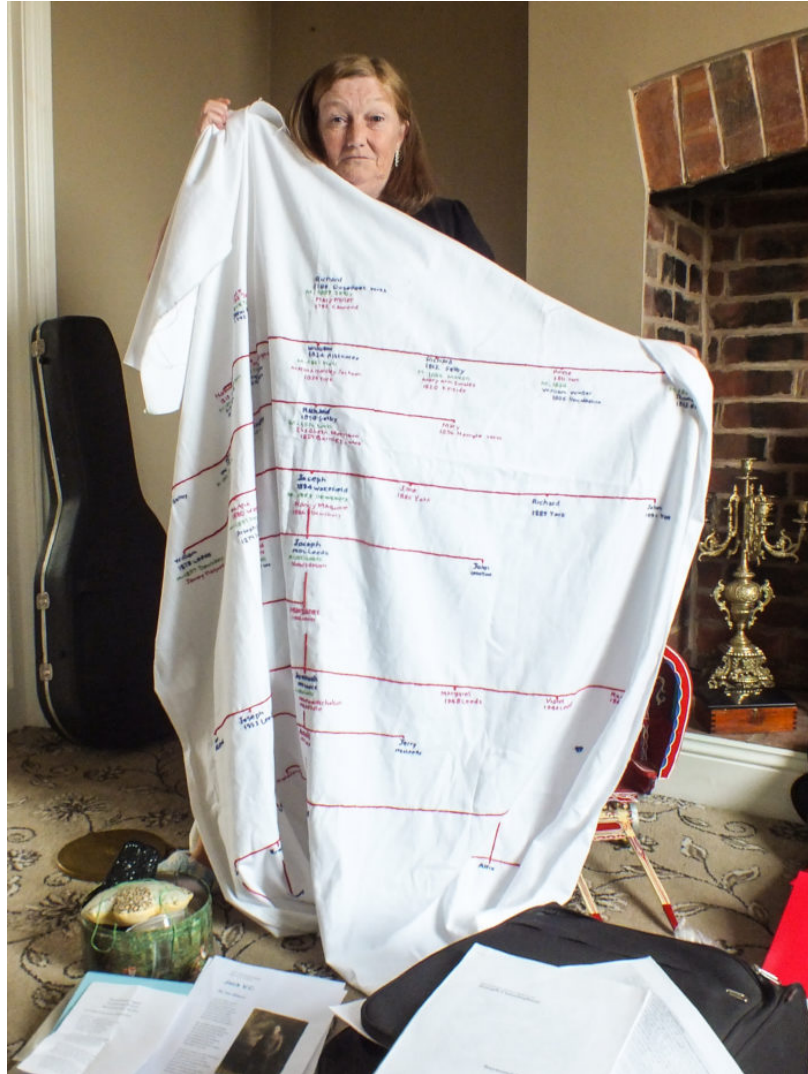
Monday 30 April 2018



## A guest blog from Amanda Reed

My name's Amanda Reed – my maiden name is Cunningham. I was born in 1964 in the Armley area of Leeds and I'm an English Gypsy. I've researched my family tree back to the 1700s. I've collected objects, photographs and documents relating to my family history and I like looking at my family history and how people used to live.

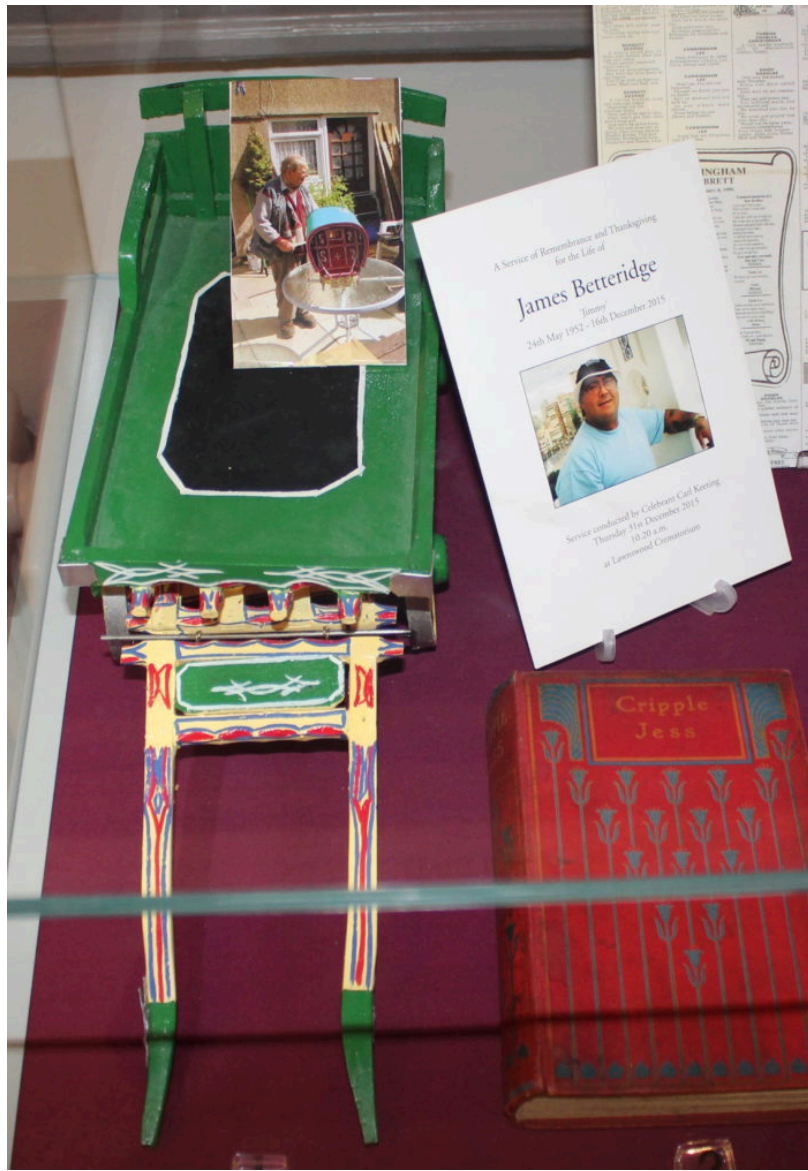
Mourning is a very important thing to the Gypsy and Traveller community – we seem to go to funerals from an early age, and we're encouraged to go to gravesides when it's memoriams and birthdays. The whole family will go, because when people die we don't forget them. We still see them as being part of our family so we would still go and visit the graveside regularly.



## Memorial cards and newspaper cutting

Nowadays, some people have leaflets or little booklets made for funerals. They put photographs and poems in, and stories of the person that's died, and that's handed out at the funeral so that everybody's got something to take home.

My great great grandfather was Joseph Cunningham, and he was 32 when he died in the First World War. We've got a picture of a memoriam that his mum used to keep on her mantelpiece until the day that she died and it was there in memory of Joseph as there was no grave to visit. He was a very brave man. He was born in Wakefield and he signed up to go into the army but unfortunately he was killed in France.



## Model cart and photograph

When my dad passed away I wanted him to have a proper, old-fashioned, Gypsy funeral, and he wanted one as well. So he came home the night before, and we had him in the crib, and he had his own special room. On one wall we had photographs of all his ancestors, on another wall we had pictures of my mum and our generation, on the other wall we had the grandkids, and then on the last wall we had photos of the great grandkids and a collage of the all the friends he'd had through his lifetime. When we took him to the cemetery the next day, we took him on the horse and cart, because that's what he wanted to go on. We had the hearse following behind, but the coffin went on the horse and cart, a cart like the one in the case, and all the flowers were around it, and his name, and I drove the horse up to Harehills cemetery.

I also held on to the last bottle of 'Old Spice' I ever bought my dad, as from being a kid I always bought him 'Old Spice' for Christmas, and every now and again I have a little smell of it because sometimes smells can remind you of people and it's the Old Spice that reminds me of my dad.





**You can see some of Amanda's objects in our Remembrance exhibition at Abbey House Museum, Leeds, until December 2018. More information [here](#).**

**Amanda will also be running a family workshop, *The Gypsies Under The Bed*, on Saturday 15 September at Abbey House Museum, 13.30-15.30. Find out more [here](#).**

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