

Appleby Horse Fair

For hundreds of years Travellers have been gathering for a week at the beginning of June for the annual Appleby Horse fair in the town of Appleby-in-Westmorland in Cumbria. This is a traditional cultural event, where those attending may take part in horse-trading and trotting races and catch up with family and friends. There are also many stalls that sell various household goods such as clothing, horse related equipment, china, jewellery and many other items.

The Fair is probably the most famous of all the Traveller fairs in England and attracts people from all over the world. The first fair took place in 1685 and the fair itself is still under the protection of a Charter granted by King James II, originally for the sale of goods and cattle, but now including horses. It is often now known as the Appleby New Fair. Whilst there is no organising committee as such, there is a lot of partnership working between Traveller representatives, the District Council, Landowners, the Police and other agencies to ensure the Fair runs as smoothly as possible.

Services from around the country that support Traveller education have worked with the DCSF and the Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) for the last 10 years to support the project 'Education on the Hoof', which only operates during the Fair week. It aims to promote the value of education to the Traveller community. The project usually runs a stall amongst all the traders providing activities for children and young people, and promotes education through displays, discussions, information and the sale of educational resources. They also run training sessions for teachers and other agencies from all over the country on aspects of Traveller history, culture, lifestyle and their implications for education and challenge myths about Travellers. Exhibitions of artwork linked into projects run by Cumbria Children's Services in local schools also feature during the week.

Further information

For details of the most recent fair and information on the historical aspects of the fair visit www.applebytowncouncil.fsnet.co.uk/events/fair.htm

For photographs of the fair visit www.visitcumbria.com/events/appleby-fair.htm

Information from the National Association of Traveller Teachers who co-ordinate 'Education on the Hoof' can be accessed at www.natt.org.uk