

TRIBUTE TO  
**FRED WALKER**  
A.K.A. 'KING OF THE COLOURED HORSES' by Dennis Thompson  
1929 -2007

A British Gypsy legend, Fred Walker lived in his colorful horse drawn Gypsy caravan his entire life.

Fred began his focus on breeding his perfect caravan horse in 1948. Fred was only 19 years old then and until his passing in November of 2007, Fred Walker maintained the genetics of his 59-year Vanner vision.

In his lifetime of focus on breeding his perfect caravan horse, Fred personally knew the stallions that inspired and began his breed, Sonny Mays and The Coal Horse. Over a lifetime of dedication, he produced or owned many of the breed's most famous sires and dams. Names like Pride, King of the Road, The Job, Gypsy Boy, Old Henry, The Sham, The Paddy Horse, Tyson, The Lob Eared Horse, The Lion King, The Horseshoe Mare, The Eagle Mare, White Angel, Delphi, The Bank, The Pio mare and more.

For years Fred religiously called Cindy and me every two weeks. "I don't drink and I don't smoke," he would say, "you are my vice; I spend my money calling you". Fred would sit in his colorful caravan on a cell phone and, with great passion, share the history and genetics of his breed with us. It was like having Justin Morgan call you every two weeks to reminisce about his stallion, Figure.

While trying to think of a name for the breed, Cindy noticed a reference to "the traditional gypsy vanner" as a picture caption in a book (written by British author Edward Hart) titled *The Coloured Horse and Pony*. The *English Chambers Dictionary* describes the word 'vanner' as "a horse suitable to pull a caravan.". Mr. Hart's English term became Cindy's inspiration for a breed's perfect name. It was while sitting with Fred in his caravan that we asked him to choose between Romany Horse and Gypsy Vanner Horse as the name for his breed. Fred immediately proclaimed,

***"Why, Gypsy Vanner Horse is the perfect name, that's what they are, a Gypsy's vanner horse."***

When we explained to Fred, our intent to only recognize his selectively bred horses as the Gypsy Vanner, he replied, ***"You know you are doing this the hard way, but it's the right way."***

The goals of the GVHS will establish and insure the integrity of Fred's - and now your -Vanner breed forever. Yes, it's the hard way, but like Fred said "it's the right way"

Cindy and I kept our relationship with Fred private all these years out of deep respect and affection for him, we adored him. After Fred's recent death I asked for and received special permission from his family to publicly expose his lifelong dedication and priceless contribution to the breed we now know as a Gypsy Vanner Horse. *The name Gypsy Vanner Horse is a gift from Cindy Thompson and Fred Walker.*



A Dunton-built Reading still in regular use in 1967.  
Fred Walker up

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Fred Walker Up © The English Gypsy Caravan