

## Romani Author Signs New Two-book Deal With Child's Play

Richard O'Neill to write two more picture books for the 'Romany Tales' series.

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Child's Play will be publishing the first of the pair, *Can Caravan*, in late 2021. In the community-focused book, a girl with a passion for design and technology collects cans for her local recycling plant and uses the metal to create a new state of the art caravan for an elderly neighbour.



Author Richard O'Neill, who has already published four books with Child's Play, said "I'm delighted with this new deal, the Child's Play team are fabulous to work with. The quality of everything they do, including the finish of the books, is first class and their ethical approach and respect for my artistic freedom played a big part in my agreeing to the new deal."

Neil Burden, CEO of Child's Play, said "We're thrilled to be working with Richard again. More than ever before, the traditional Romani values of hard-work, honesty, empathy, resilience and resourcefulness deserve to be celebrated and spread far and wide. What's more, publishing these books is only part of the story. Richard's energy and endeavour, particularly in schools and libraries, is keeping alive the ancient tradition of oral storytelling, which is crucial to our ongoing sense of community and shared humanity."

The acclaimed Romany Tales have created a new genre of picture books, which provide much-needed, authentic representation of Traveller culture. O'Neill's most recent book, *The Lost Homework*, was included in BookTrust's *Great Books Guide 2020* and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals Book Club's reading list (Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities).

### Notes for Editors

*Richard O'Neill* was born and brought up in a large traditional Romani family in the North of England. He is an award-winning storyteller and writer who tells his original stories in schools, museums, libraries and theatres throughout the UK. A sixth generation storyteller, he grew up in a vigorous oral storytelling tradition, learning his skills from some of the best Travelling storytellers in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Richard is the author of twelve children's books, and his stories and plays have been broadcast on BBC Radio. His digital stories have been enjoyed throughout the world, and in 2013, he was the recipient of the National Literacy Hero award. He also founded the UK's Diverse Book Week, which takes place in June each year.

<https://richardthestoryteller.weebly.com/diverse-book-week.html>

The **Romany Tales** series currently contains the following picture books: *Ossiri and the Bala Mengro* (2016), *Yokki and the Parno Gry* (2016), *Polonius the Pit Pony* (2018) and *The Lost Homework* (2019). *Ossiri and the Bala Mengro* and *Polonius the Pit Pony* have both been selected for EmpathyLab's Read for Empathy Guide in the past.

**Child's Play** has a history of creating innovative, award-winning books for children from 0-8 years that promote learning through play – books that fully reflect our diverse society in terms of heritage, disability, gender and family. Read more at our website: <http://www.childs-play.com/>

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