

By Keith Gladdis

THEY could be scenes from the Third World as families eke out a living in makeshift shelters amid the filth of a rubbish dump.

But the extraordinary photographs were taken at the site of a former football ground in a leafy London suburb.

More than 50 Romanians are living in ramshackle huts made from waste wood, rubble and plastic - just yards from playing fields and £400,000 family homes.

For more than two years, migrants from the Transylvania region of Romania have been travelling to the site in Hendon as they find work in the capital.

They have forced gaps in a 10ft fence around the site - ignoring warning signs in Romanian - to make their home in the camp

**'The rats are a problem'**

despite it having no running water, electricity or sanitation and being next to ever-growing piles of vermin-infested filth. They scavenge in the rubbish for clothes to wear or for things to sell to buy food.

Britain is expecting an influx of Romanians - and Bulgarians - when they are given free access to our jobs market in January. Ministers have refused to put an estimate on how many will travel here but campaign group MigrationWatch says it could be 50,000 every year for five years from 2014.

Tiberius Bokor, 26, lives in a 6ft by 12ft 'home' with his wife and four others. He comes from Brasov in Transylvania and earns about £40 a day as a labourer while his wife, Brittany, 26, who is the only woman in the camp, earns about £30 a day at a car wash.

'We knew about this place before we travelled to Britain,' he said. 'We came a week ago. When I got here I

# Shanty town off a suburban London street

## Romanians scrape a living amid squalor of dump

built this shelter in a day. I am here because I can earn more than I can at home. I came here for eight months last year and I think we will be here now for three months. We are always coming back and forth.

'Everyone has children at home that they are trying to provide for.'

Mrs Bokor sends most of her wages home to the couple's two young sons, who are living with family in Romania. She said: 'We have no fresh water. We can use the water in the park to bathe and wash clothes but we go to Tesco to get drinking water.'

'Obviously no one wants to live like this. We have told the council that we are happy to clear the rub-

bish away but they just want rid of us. The rats are a problem but there is a local cat that helps.'

She said the council should do more 'to make this place safe' and accused the police of 'hassling' them.

Their shelter is split into three areas each with two mattresses. Uprturned buckets are used as seats and clothes are kept in bags hung on nails in the wooden walls.

Mrs Bokor, who keeps in touch with her children through Skype, said the council had asked if any of them wanted to go home. 'We all want to see our families but we are here to work,' she said. 'I would love to live in the UK permanently. I

would love to have enough money to bring all my family here.'

Gus Bodur, 49, was involved with Hendon FC, who formerly played at the site, and still lives nearby. He says it's 'heartbreaking' what has happened to the ground. 'The club used to be an important part of the community,' he said.

'These people have been seen arriving at the ground with a map telling them where to go. The site should be cleared and then pulled down. It is a great shame.'

David Haynes, 75, who has lived opposite the site for 40 years, said: 'There started to be a problem with fly-tipping but then the migrants moved in too. Even after the fence

was put up there was a problem. The council and the police are not doing enough.'

Barnet Council sold the site to developers last year but still owns the freehold. Legal challenges over its sale have held up development.

A council spokesman said: 'We have been working with the police, the leaseholder and homeless charities to clear the area and repatriate the squatters. Despite repeated attempts to secure the site, it has been illegally re-occupied on at least three occasions.'

Asked if it had considered paying for security at the site, the spokesman said: 'That would be a matter for the developer.'

many... run their own out-of-hours services and helping out in A&E departments.

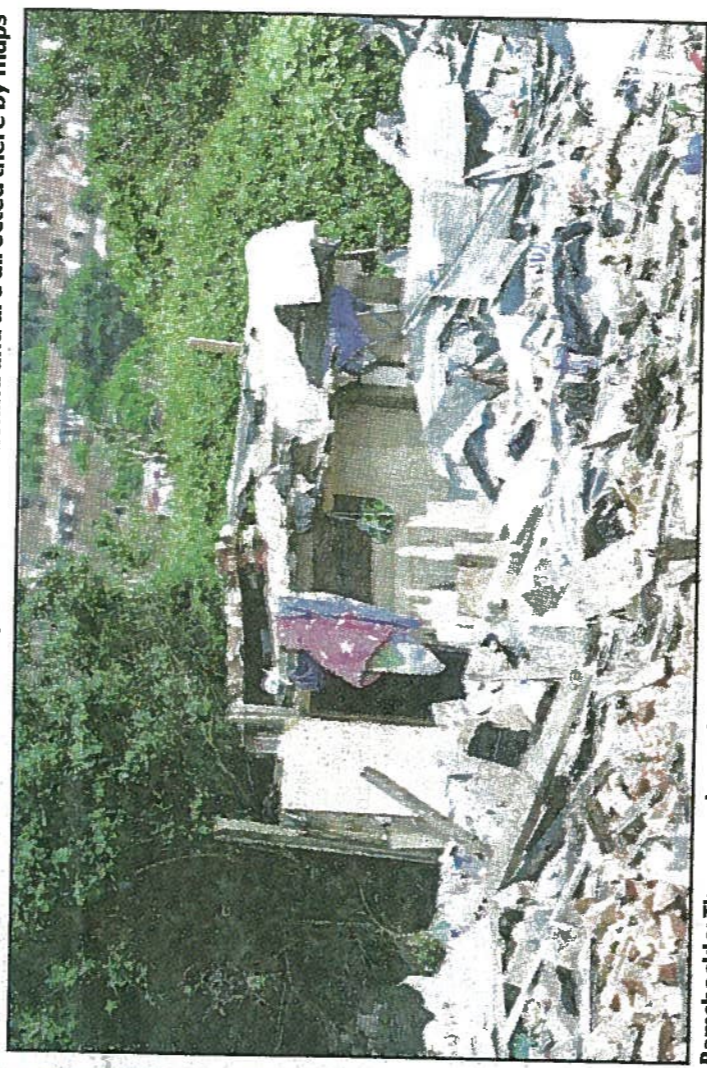
barrister). And now they... the first time in half a millennium, the



Home from home: There are about 50 Romanians from the Transylvania region at the site. Many know about the camp before they leave their homeland and are directed there by maps



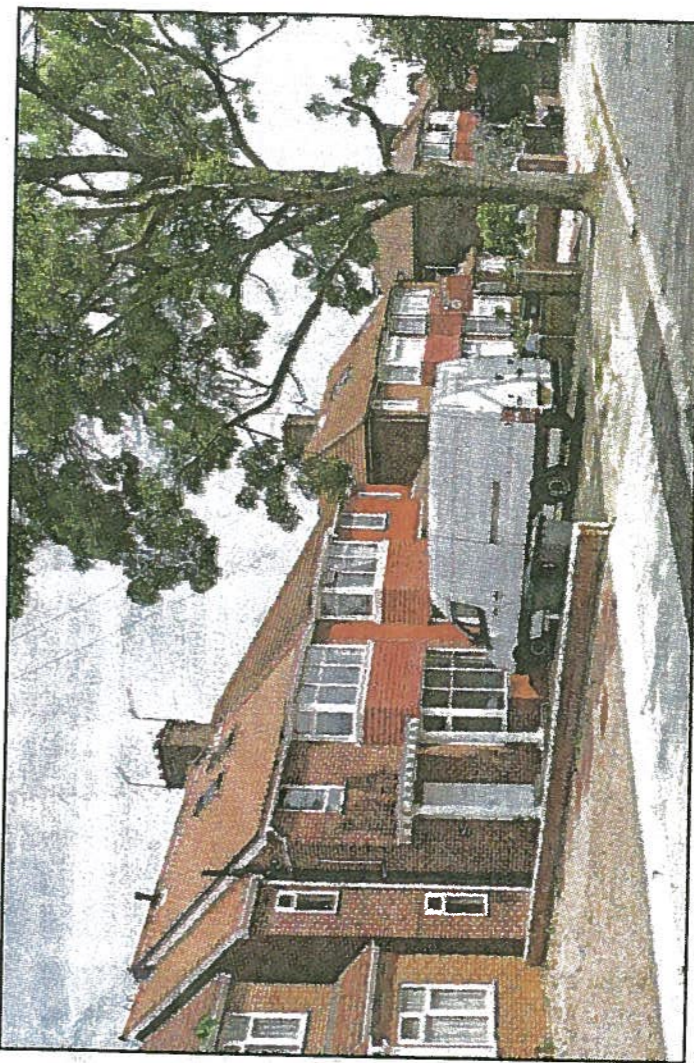
Tiberius Bokor: 'I am here because I can earn more than I can back home'



Ramshackle: The camp is used as a base from which the migrants seek work



Eyesore: The immigrants search through the rubbish for items they can use or sell



Neighbours: Three-bedroom homes near the site sell for £400,000 Pictures: GEORGIE GILLARD