INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO 50 YEARS FLOURISHING.

THIS YEAR WE ARE CELEBRATING OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY. WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A WONDERFUL IDEA TO TELL OUR STORY SO FAR THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTICLES, POSTERS, INTERVIEWS AND EVERYTHING ELSE WE FOUND WHEN WE CLEANED OUT OUR FILING CABINETS.

THE SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS BOOK ARE AS ECLECTIC AS THE MANY CHARACTERS THAT HAVE COME THROUGH OUR DOORS OVER THE YEARS.

FROM TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO TIN SMITHING, ACCOMMODATION BATTLES TO HIGH KINGS, MEATH TRAVELLERS WORKSHOPS HAS FOLLOWED A UNIQUE ROAD DURING IT'S 50 YEARS, BUT IT'S ONE WE ALWAYS MADE SURE WAS THE RIGHT PATH FOR TRAVELLERS IN MEATH.

AS YOU FOLLOW THE PAGES, YOU WILL SEE THAT AS TRAVELLERS IN MEATH GREW MORE CONFIDENT AND ORGANISED, SO DID MEATH TRAVELLERS WORKSHOPS, LEADING TO MANY GROUND BREAKING EVENTS OVER THE YEARS. THESE INNOVATIVE PROJECTS TOOK PLACE BECAUSE TRAVELLERS IN THE AREA HAD THE VISION AND SUPPORT OF BROAD-MINDED PEOPLE, TO BRING TO LIFE WHAT TO SOME WOULD SEEM A CRAZY IDEA.

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SHARE WITH YOU IMAGES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH US OVER THE YEARS AND IMAGES OF TRAVELLERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FAMILIES IN CO. MEATH. LOOKING THROUGH THE PHOTOGRAPHS BOUGHT BACK MANY MEMORIES, AND MADE US FEEL LONESOME FOR THE 'GOOD AULD DAYS' WHEN LIFE WAS HARDER, BUT SIMPLER AND BEFORE THE PRESSURES OF MODERN LIFE CREEPT IN.

THROUGH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, WE NOW SEE TRAVELLERS IN CO. MEATH PROUD OF THEIR OWN IDENTITY. THEY HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO TAKE PART IN MAINSTREAM RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND STRIVE FOR THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION. TRAVELLERS TAKE UP NON-TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT ROLES AND ALSO PROVE TO BE ACTIVE CITIZENS. TRAVELLERS TODAY ARE MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY THAT WE SHARE.

WE BELIEVE THAT TRAVELLERS CAN HAVE A CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE PLACE IN SOCIETY. IN ORDER FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, THERE IS A NEED FOR PROGRESSIVE INTEGRATION WHILST RETAINING TRAVELLER IDENTITY; AS OPPOSED TO ASSIMILATION AND THE EROSION OF TRAVELLER CULTURE.

AS A TRAVELLER LED ORGANISATION, WE ARE PROUD TO ENCOURAGE THE RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING AND RETENTION OF TRADITIONAL TRAVELLER CULTURE, HISTORY AND HERITAGE. WE WORK TOWARDS THE WIDER COMMUNITY HAVING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF TRAVELLER CULTURE AND THE STRUCTURES OF THE EXTENDED FAMILY. WE ALSO STAND WITH YOUNG AND NOT SO YOUNG TRAVELLERS TO EMBRACE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THEIR CULTURE AND TO STAND UP AND BE PROUD TO BE A TRAVELLER.

"NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF YOUR ACTIONS.
WITH ONE SMALL GESTURE YOU CAN CHANGE A PERSON'S LIFE.
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE". KEVIN MARTIN – FACEBOOK - 15 JUNE 2013

THIS BOOK IS BOUGHT TO YOU WITH THE KIND SUPPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN RECOGNITION OF TRAVELLER PRIDE WEEK 2015.
Life in Years Past

Reading the words spoken by the Travellers living and camping around Navan one comes to see there are two themes consistently expressed by these men and women when describing the life they remember from their youth. First, those times were more difficult in almost every respect. Work was hard and done over long hours and the reward was usually just enough food to put on the children's plates. Begging was a necessity. A family did not own much in the way of comforts. Mike Quinn remembers that in the winter of 1920 there was just one pair of boots between him and another man; they would do their tasks one at a time, the one waiting shoeless while the other tended to his ponies! Yet, those times are the ones which are held most dear in their memories; there was pride in the knowledge that what a family did have, they had earned. Perhaps more important was the travelling itself and the contact with friends and family that this brought. It seems to Patsy Joyce that this contact has been lost. "You'd have an auld hike," he says, "or an auld pony and trap, and away you'd go to see one another. They used to call it going for a Kaitly, but they don't do that today."

Both of these themes are eloquently stated in the words of Paddy McDonagh:

"We done the best we could. We were all poor people. We come... and worked in the bogs, working picking spuds, beets, turnips and all. Everyone was sort of poor, then they all got sort of rich again, got good auld ponies and carts, got good tents. We had really bad tents the first time. Some of us might not have a good cover at all; the rain came down in on top of you... We had hard times, very hard times,... but we started"

In 1994, as part of the Navan Travellers Workshops heritage project, young local Travellers produced the book "Travellers... their life and times". This book contained interviews and photographs documenting the history of Travellers in Navan. The young people who produced the book were: Joey Hand, Suzanne Power, Jimmy Power Snr, Christy McDonagh, Noeleen Nevin, John Nevin, Mary Lawrence, Davy McDonagh and Joe Duke.
Several of the families who were interviewed recalled the many different ways in which people would earn a living in the old days. Old Julia Quinn explains that:

"The men used to make oil lamps, big lamps, and small ones, and the women would go out to the country and get the potatoes, dig them up, and bring them back. They would put them in the potato drier and dry them out, and then they would sell them. They were a good way to earn a living, even for a half-gallon of oil."
BEFORE 1965

JOHN MCDONAGH CONNAUGHT RANGER
IN THE BRITISH ARMY IN THE EARLY 1900'S.

KATE COLLINS AND HER SON,
PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN A
STUDIO IN EDDENDERRY IN
THE 1950'S.

THE LEGION OF MARY AT THE ‘RING OF THE ROAD’
GIBBSTOWN, CO. MEATH WITH THE POWER AND
HAND FAMILIES.

PHOTOGRAPHER IS DELANEY FROM NAVAN.

PASSING ON TINSMITH SKILLS,
PADDY & ELLEN QUINN MCDONAGH
WITH CAMILLUS MCDONAGH

PHOTO TAKEN BY PADRAIG “MASTER” GREENE
IN BALLINALEE, LONGFORD IN THE EARLY 1930’S.

MCDONAGH, WARD AND QUINN MCDONAGH
FAMILIES.
BEFORE 1965

KEENANS, COLLINS AND QUINN MCDONAGHS TAKEN AROUND CARNAROSS KELLS CO. MEATH

LAWRENCE AND MCDONAGHS TAKEN IN CO. MEATH

WARD FAMILY ON THE ROADSIDE

TRAVELLER FAMILY ON THE ROADSIDE

KEENANS AND QUINN MCDONAGHS HAVING A PORTRAIT TAKEN IN THEIR SUNDAY BEST IN KELLS CO. MEATH (NOTE THE ‘EASY WALKER’ BOOTS)

TUNA COLLINS, BIDDY QUINN MCDONAGH AND HER DAUGHTER THERESA TAKEN IN KELLS CO. MEATH
The beginning....

Coming to Navan

Meath Travellers Workshops, longest serving member of staff, Ellen McDonagh remember her time on “The Car park”.

“The unofficial camp which became known as “The Car Park” was on the stretch on land on Kennedy Road which now has the Post Office and part of Navan Shopping Centre car park.

The camp established on that site lasted from 1974 to about 1984. During that time it was the focus of Travellers organising and getting proactive in the town. The families in the camp felt strongly about securing proper housing and education for their families. Their time on the car park signalled the start of proper organising in Navan to begin to secure these.

Families

In the winter of 1974, Chaps Christy came to Navan for potato picking. The Hawk’s Mary, Mike Quinn, Julia and Paddy Nevin came too. In May 1975, my father Mikey Quinn came to Navan for 3 weeks to visit on the way to Dundalk and ended up staying.

These were some of the first families on the Car Park. I left school in June 1975 and was married on the 12th of November 1975. Michael and I then moved into the site, although Michael was still away in the Army most of the time.

Before we arrived on the Car park, the main families in the county were the Hands, Gavins, Power and later the Dukes and the Dublin Joyces. These families mainly moved around Meath and were joined at times by families from Westmeath, Roscommon, Longford and Louth who moved here for potato picking. Eventually most families stopped in the car park.
St Judes remembered by Ellen McDonagh

St Judes committee, the Traveller Solidarity Group had been active since 1966 and was chaired by Fr Sinnott for 10 years. The committee worked closely with the St Vincent De Paul working closely to alleviate poverty of Travellers in the county.

As I remember it, in early 1976, Mary Mc Fadden, Ann Duddy, Mary Lawlor and James Hayes had a meeting upstairs in the CYWS hall. They were concerned about the quality of accommodation for Travellers and wanted to help. Myself and Neddy Power (Snr) were seen at the time as "educated Travellers" so we joined them later for meetings in St. Marys Church. Fr Johnny Kerrane, Sr. Peter, Sr. Marie Louise were also there.

In 1976, Dr James Hayes took over as chair and myself and Ned Power became the first Traveller members of the group. I remember Cyril Marron was studying to be a priest in the Holy Ghost Fathers at the time. He contacted Dr Hayes and said he was interested in spending time with the Travellers in Navan. He moved into a caravan on the car park. As I recall he had a great passion for community development and he introduced this approach to the committee. That was the beginning of the change, our work became more organised and more effective. In 1982 the committee employed Brigitte Mintern as a youth worker and Meath County Council employed a Traveller Social Worker Ashling O’Leary. The committee was getting more structured and successful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Standard Housing</th>
<th>Chalets on serviced sites</th>
<th>Trailers on authorised sites</th>
<th>Roadside</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Transients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1974 - 1984
OFFICIAL OPENING OF ST. COLUMBAN'S CRESENT

FIRST BABY BORN IN COLUMBAN'S CRESENT
LÆRA MCDONAGH BEING CHRISTENED BY BISHOP JOHN MC CORMACK

TERESA REILLY, BRIDGET REILLY, MARIE MCDONAGH
NATHANYA MCDONAGH AND GEORGE THE CAT

Itinerant Dwellings Proposal

A PROPOSAL to incorporate ten itinerant dwellings in a proposed local authority housing scheme at Trim Road, Navan, emerged from a meeting of the itinerant settlement sub-committee on Tuesday.

BEST SITE
The sub-committee concluded that the Trim Road site was the most suitable of the three inspected. The other sites were at the rear of St. Brigid's Villas, Navan, and on the Athboy Road.

A spokesman for the sub-committee said it was proposed that the ten small dwellings would be suitable for families with small children.
Early Summer Project

Fancy dress competition at the first summer project

The country's only summer project for the children of travelling people gets underway in Navan next Wednesday (1st August) and the indications are that it will be the most successful to date.

Over 200 children from Navan and the surrounding townslands will spend three weeks learning how to participate in organised sports, visiting places of historic interest, spending an afternoon at the beach and calling in to see how the local fire brigade and Garda stations operate.

It is all being done both to help travellers' children become more aware of the workings of the settled community and to remove the fears, ignorance and prejudice of the latter.

LOCAL
This year the people who organise the project, the local Navan Travellers' Committee, which was formerly known as St. Jude's are cutting down on the number of volunteers from the group Voluntary Services International (V.S.I.) so that more local people can become involved.

Eight people from V.S.I. comprising two Germans, two Finns, and a member each from Denmark, Turkey, England and Ireland, will be helping with the project as well as about a dozen local volunteers. One of the volunteers, local schoolteacher, Ms. Ger Murphy, explains: "We hope to cut down on the ignorance and suspicions on both sides."

Navan is unique in that it is the only location in Ireland where travellers have their own summer project. It is run on somewhat similar grounds to the settled community's summer project which recently concluded. The 70 travellers' families pay £5 each to participate. The vast bulk of the money needed to run the project comes in the form of a £2,500 grant from the Department of Education while Navan Co. Council are expected also to contribute about £200.

By RICHARD MOORE

and money," she says.

Ultimately, it is hoped that both the children from the settled community and the travellers will be accommodated in one summer project. That is the ideal, but there is a long way to go although the great between the two different cultures is diminishing each year.

Ger Murphy says: "In the long-term it is hoped to have just one summer project. What we hope is to have them in with the settled community but they have a very different culture."

LIFESTYLE
Part of that difference in culture can be seen in the fact that the travellers almost have to be taught how to play in an organised way. Very few travellers are involved in clubs or are used to playing in organised groups. Their lifestyle is different.

Ger Murphy explains: "A lot of travellers don't have a chance to be children, especially girls. When a girl is eight or nine her job is to look after the younger kids and some of them are engaged at 13."

Paul Noonan, a youth and community worker employed by the travellers' committee, has found the same thing. He says: "The boys are treated as adults from the time they make their First Communion."

FEARS
Paul Noonan is just one of the two youth and community workers employed by travellers' committees in the country. He has been working for Navan Travellers' Committee since last September and he sees the project as being a particularly good way of developing travellers' self-confidence and helping remove their fears of the settled community.

"Travellers' children in the town are not involved in the local range of activities that settled kids would be involved in," Paul Noonan reveals. With about 50% of the 200 travellers' children not attending school, many of them would not be used to school-based activities. "The project will help their self-confidence and creativity and provide them with fun and enjoyment," he adds.

The feedback from last year's project was very good, with youngsters asking eagerly at Christmas when it would be commencing again. The project caters for children for four to 18 years and runs each day from 11 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

The provisional timetable includes swimming, storytelling in the library (for four to seven year olds), disco dancing, art, gardening, hairdressing, teatime, mini volleyball, road races, cycling, map reading, crafts, poetry, basketball, a treasure hunt, puppet making, a pirate at Beeline and a visit to Slieve Holiday Centre.

The summer project is also very much being part of the process of creating better understanding between the settled community and the travellers. Paul Noonan has seen definite improvements, particularly among school children. "I have given talks in local schools on travellers and the response has been very good," he says.

The Navan Travellers' Committee, comprising both the settled community and the travellers, is anxious for volunteers from the locality to help with this year's project. Those who wish to help should contact Paul Noonan at Room 2 (upstairs) in the C.W.S. Hall, Navan.
GLORY:
James McGovern (left) and Anthony McConnell bid for All-Ireland.
PAGE 12.

SUCCESS:
Stephen Craine goes nap at Navan races.
PAGE 11.

THE SUMMER PROJECT HITS THE FRONT PAGE 1985
FIRST THERE WAS THE FUNDRAISING!
BY BERNADETTE MCMAHON

GOING AROUND THE TOWN ASKING PEOPLE TO DONATE OR CONTRIBUTE A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR THE TWO WEEKS OF THE PROJECT. THESE DONATIONS VARIED FROM FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO A PACKET OF CRAYONS. IN ONE PLACE WE CALLED, THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS SERVING BEHIND THE COUNTER DIDN'T WANT TO CONTRIBUTE ANYTHING TO THE PROJECT. WE PLEADED AND ARGUED, HOLDING OUR OWN TO COMBAT THE OBVIOUS RACISM INHERENT IN HIS COMMENTS. EVENTUALLY WE LEFT EMPTY HANDED, FEELING DEJECTION AND ANGRY. HOWEVER, AS WE WERE WALKING DOWN THE ROAD, A SMALL VOICE BEHIND US CALLED. WE TURNED AROUND TO SEE AN ELDERLY LADY PEERING AROUND THE CORNER OF AN ALLEY ONTO THE STREET. WE WENT BACK TO HER AND SHE PUSHED A LARGE BOX OF BISCUITS TOWARDS US. "HERE TAKE THIS" SHE WHISPERED FEARFULLY, "AND DON'T LET HIM KNOW I GAVE IT TO YOU!". I OFTEN WONDERED WHAT KIND OF LIFE SHE HAD WITH HER CROCHETY SON. WE WONDERED IF MAYBE HE HAD A CHANCE TO GO ON SUMMER PROJECTS WHEN HE WAS A SMALL BOY, WOULD HE BE SUCH A GRUMP NOW.

WAITING AT THE GATE
BY SUZANNE

WE USED TO GO TO THE PROJECT, A GOOD FEW OF US, ONE BROTHER AND THREE SISTERS. MICHAEL USED TO COLLECT US AT 9.30, WE'D BE WAITING AT THE GATE FROM 7.30. WE'D GET INTO THE VAN AND SING ALL THE WAY IN. THIS WAS OUR SUMMER HOLIDAY FOR THE YEAR. WHEN SCHOOL FINISHED IT WAS WHAT WE LOOKED FORWARD TO. IT WAS OUR 2 WEEK SUMMER HOLIDAY.

THE MYSTERY TOUR BADDIES
BY MICHAEL JAMES

ON THE MYSTERY TOURS THE PEOPLE DRESSED UP AS "BADDIES" ALWAYS GOT THE WORST OF IT. THE CHILDREN HAD TO FIND THE BADDIE AND SOMETIMES WE HAD GUARDS TO ARREST THEM. I REMEMBER ONE DAY TRIP AT SLANE HILL. THE KIDS SAW THE BADDIE DRESSED UP AS BATMAN. HE WAS WAVING OVER AT THEM, TEASING THEM. THE KIDS LOST THE HEAD, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY SEEN THE QUAD CAR WAS HAD ARRANGED TO ARREST HIM COMING OVER THE HILL WITH IT'S SIREN ON. ABOUT 120 KIDS TOOK OFF TO CATCH BATMAN THEMSELVES. NONE OF US COULD STOP THE CHARGE AS THEY TOOK OFF AFTER HIM AND PULLED POOR BATMAN TO THE GROUND. I DON'T THINK THE POOR MAN HAS BEEN THE SAME SINCE.
NO IDEA WHAT WAS IN STORE?
BY BRIGETTE MINTERN
I WAS THERE FOR THE FIRST ONE, WHAT CAN I REMEMBER? PANIC IN THE VERY FIRST MORNING AS EVERYONE GATHERED OUTSIDE THE PREFAB AT O MAHONY'S GAA GROUNDS WITH NO IDEA OF WHAT WAS IN STORE FOR HIM OR HER. MIND YOU, NEITHER DID I! PILING INTO AISLING'S BROWN MINI, MY WHITE RENAULT 4 AND THE BACK OF MICHAEL AND NELL'S VAN WE SET OFF ON DAYS OF MYSTERY TOURS, SWIMMING, TRIPS TO THE BEACH, SINGING, DANCING, PAINTING, FANCY DRESS, WE DID IT ALL. EVERYONE GOT INVOLVED, THE COMMITTEE, VOLUNTEERS, TEACHERS ON SUMMER HOLIDAYS, OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES AND MOST OF ALL THE TRAVELLER CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS. FOR ME PERSONALLY, I HAVE NEVER HAD SO MUCH FUN SINCE THAT TIME 21 YEARSAGO!

THE CHILD THAT DRANK THE PAINT
BY MARTINA
IN NAVAN O MAHONY'S THERE WAS A LITTLE CHILD WHO USED TO DRINK THE PAINT, THE RED PAINT. I USED TO LOOK AT HIM IN DISGUST. SOME OF THE KIDS USED TO GIVE IT TO HIM ON PURPOSE. THERE WAS A BOY WHO USED TO STAND EVERY MORNING AT THE GATE LOOKING FOR CHANGE. MY DADDY USED TO GET CHANGE OFF MY MOMMY TO GIVE IT TO HIM.

THE KIDS AND THE VSI
BY PATRICK REILLY
I'VE WORKED ON THE SUMMER PROJECT FOR 19 YEARS. THE FONDEST MEMORIES I HAVE ARE BASICALLY DOWN TO THE KIDS. THE REASON I SAY THE KIDS IS BECAUSE THERE WAS A LOT OF THEM WHO WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN BROUGHT AWAY BY THEIR PARENTS. THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT IT FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR, THE LOOK ON THEIR FACES. EVEN THE VSI PEOPLE WERE TALKED ABOUT AND THE CHILDREN WOULD TALK ABOUT THEM IF THE COUNTRY CAME UP IN CLASS.
Navan Houses 31 Travelling Families

The number of travelling families housed in Co. Meath has risen from 25 in 1981 to 37, a report from Mr. F. W. Kavanagh, secretary, Meath Co. Council, shows, but 84 families still are living on the roadside. Navan now has 31 travelling families in houses, Dunboyne has three and Bellenstows has one.

The report states that for the first time ever a travelling girl has started secondary school at St. Joseph’s Convent of Mercy, Navan. She is from the new group housing scheme at St. Columban’s Crescent, Trim Road, Navan.

The increase in families housed is due to the allocation of the group housing scheme for 12 families at St. Columban’s Crescent. But the number of travelling families still with no place to live or basic facilities represents 38% of the total in Co. Meath.

The new housing scheme at St. Columban’s Crescent accommodates 12 of the travelling families in Navan. Other families have been accommodated as follows: Claremont Estate (5); town parks (4); Clusker Park (2); Bayne Villas (2); Emmet Terrace (1) and on the outskirts of the town: Windtown Road (3); Alexander (3) and Lismullen (1).

The report states that the families at St. Columban’s Terrace have settled in well with no major problems arising. Three of the teenagers in this scheme have got work, one of the young mothers helps in the pre-school and another is taking part in an AnCO/EnC course.

According to Mr. Kavanagh, there has been no great influx of families into Meath following the provision of facilities for them in the county. Navan obviously still has the biggest accommodation problem, he points out, but he adds that if the problem was tackled immediately on a number of fronts it could be solved in the not-too-distant future. The other areas have fewer families, allowing an opportunity to deal with the situation before it becomes unmanageable. Mr. Kavanagh states.

"However, if the provision of accommodation for travelling families is not planned for in the immediate future, the numbers on the roadside in all areas will increase rapidly, due to the large families and early marriages," Mr. Kavanagh concludes."
"I ARRIVED IN DECEMBER WITH SNOW ON THE GROUND TO TAKE UP THE POSITION AS DIRECTOR OF THE WORKSHOP. MY FIRST TASK WAS LETTING THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS KNOW THEY HAD A PLACE ON THE COURSE. IT ALSO GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW THE PARENTS AND FAMILIES, OF ALL THE TRAINEES. FROM THE START I ALWAYS SEEN THE WORKSHOP AS BEING PART OF THE TRAVELLERS COMMUNITY AND WAS A MEANS TO ASSIST YOUNG TRAVELLERS TO DEVELOP SKILLS AND ABILITIES THAT WOULD BE USEFUL TO THEM AS INDIVIDUALS AND ALSO BUILD THE CAPACITY FOR TRAVELLERS AS A COMMUNITY, MOST IMPORTANTLY I WANTED EVERYBODY TO HAVE A BIT OF CRAIC!

I ALWAYS REMEMBERED THE WARM WELCOME I RECEIVED FROM THE FAMILIES WHO HAD PLENTY OF IDEAS ON HOW I SHOULD KEEP THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN LINE. THANKFULLY FOR ME AND THE TRAINEES I NEVER IMPLEMENTED ANY OF THE PARENTS' SUGGESTIONS ON DISCIPLINE.

ON THE FIRST DAY I SPOKE WITH THE DIRECTOR OF A WORKSHOP IN DUBLIN, HIS ADVICE WAS FOR ME TO PICK ONE OF THE LADS WHO MIGHT CAUSE TROUBLE FOR ME AND SACK HIM. AS HE SPOKE TO ME ON THE PHONE I WAS WATCHING ALL THE LADS CLIMBING ONTO THE ROOF OF THE WORKSHOP, MY THOUGHT AT THAT MOMENT WAS "TAKE YOUR PICK". THANKFULLY AGAIN I IGNORED THIS ADVICE AND DURING MY TIME AS DIRECTOR NO ONE WAS SACKED, IN FACT DISCIPLINE WAS NEVER A PROBLEM. I LOOK BACK ON MY TIME WITH THE YOUNG TRAVELLERS OF NAVAN AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH GREAT FONDNESS, I MADE GOOD FRIENDS AND HOPEFULLY I MADE SOME SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY."

PATRICK MURPHY WAS THE VERY FIRST DIRECTOR OF WHAT WAS THEN CALLED NAVAN TRAVELLERS WORKSHOPS.