

Annual Report 2012



Navan Travellers Workshops Ltd trading as

Meath Travellers Workshops

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Foreword

Even though severe budgetary cuts dictated how Meath Travellers Workshops carried out their work, it did not deter or hinder the volume and scope of our efforts and results in 2012. Our staff, management and volunteers rose to the economic challenges with imagination and resolve, making this year one of our most exciting and productive yet.



This year saw the National Traveller Partnership up and running in every sense. This new body acts as an umbrella group and funding conduit for Traveller projects in Ireland. MTW is playing a crucial role in this initiative to ensure Traveller led services and projects continue to deliver on the ground with the funding and support necessary. We see this new development as a positive move for MTW and Traveller projects nationally.

2012 saw Meath Travellers Workshops build on their growing and respected reputation as a national leader in preserving and promoting Traveller Heritage and Culture. Work to construct a Traveller Heritage Park outside Kells continued apace with the signing off of our Feasibility Study. Practical work on the site has begun and has become a constant addition to our weekly work plan.

In an interesting and exciting development, our position as a strong community educator in Irish and Traveller Heritage will be further expanded as Meath Travellers Workshops take on organising a major heritage festival next year on the Hill of Tara. The Tara High Kings Festival will take place next September and will see us working hand in hand with other organisations such the Gardaí, Rathfeigh and Skryne Historical Society, The GAA and Macra na Feirme. We were delighted when this event has been recognised as one of the signature events for the Gathering 2013 initiative.

Lastly, I would like to express sincere gratitude to everyone involved in the Meath Travellers Workshops, the Directors, staff, volunteers and everyone in the Community who has offered their support and advice over the years to us and we look forward to this continuing into the future.

Joe Reilly
Chairperson

Childcare and Education

Pre-School

The Pre-School sessions cater for 10 Traveller and settled children in the 3-5 year age group. It is a well-run and well-equipped facility which provides a comfortable and safe environment for all the children attending. The pre –school reached its capacity in 2011. The service is overseen by the Early Childhood Education Co-ordinator, Marie McDonagh. Marie is assisted by a Community Employment worker. The Preschool curriculum includes various methods of play, arts and crafts, music and cooking. Cooking is particularly enjoyable for the children and takes place every Friday. So far the group has made a wide range of delicious treats ranging between sweet and savoury dishes – they have baked brownies, gingerbread men and Halloween themed buns and mini pizzas to name but a few.



Little Angels enjoy a trip to Dublin Zoo!

Outdoor play is an important part of the children's day, our outdoor play area is fully utilised with children enjoying activities such as building birds nests.

The pre-school children also enjoyed an outdoor trip to Dublin Zoo. They were very excited about seeing all the different animals, their favourite animals were monkeys, elephants and giraffes.

The pre-school had a Halloween themed fancy dress morning where they all dressed up into costumes from Disney characters to mystical creatures such as fairies and knights. The pre-school children took part in the Summer Project which took place in July where they visited Causey Farm and Du na Rí forest.

There was great excitement among the children when Santa arrived at his grotto which was our Barrel Top Wagon. Santa brought the naughty and nice list with him. The children were very excited as they were all on the nice list; Santa gave them each a gift and told them what he would be bringing Christmas morning. It was a lovely morning and everyone, staff and children have great memories of it.

After-school

The 20 children in our care are supported by a full childcare team. The children receive support in completing their homework; learn arts and crafts and play games.

The children receive a hot meal and a light snack, should they want it, before going home. The healthy eating programme is being followed and the children are enjoying the variety of food being served. On a regular occasion the after-school group enjoy a cooking class. All ingredients used are seasonal and the food ranges from savoury to sweet. Limited staff numbers has meant that outside trips, for example, to the library are less frequent than we'd like.

At Christmas, the after-school children also met Santa. Santa also showed them the naughty and nice list and talked about what presents they were getting. Each child left with a gift. They were very excited about his visit to the workshop. The After school also took part in the Summer Project that took place in July. They visited Causey Farm and Dun na Rí forest and enjoyed a week of fun filled days.

The Crann Support Group Crann Support Group administers the finances of the Little Angels childcare services. The Crann group support 11 different community groups throughout the county. This back up and support has ensured the children have the opportunity to avail of the excellent service provided by the Little Angels childcare staff. Crann also support access to knowledge, expertise and training that ensures this quality is maintained.



Youth

Our Youth Work department is overseen by a youth work co-ordinator Kay McCabe and two assistant youth workers. Kay and one of the assistant Youth Workers, Michael Mac Donnachada are employed by Involve (formerly National Association of Traveller Centres). Kay is one of over 20 Youth Workers placed in Traveller projects around the country. This link works very well for MTW Ltd as it allows us to share ideas by meeting up with lots of other Traveller youth groups around the country. The other Youth Worker is CE Participant Marie O Shea.

The calendar highlight for many in MTW Ltd is our Summer Project, which is now running for nearly 30 years and is the longest project of its kind in Ireland. Over the years we have developed a schedule of trips, games, sports and drama that children enjoy and look forward to. This year we brought 11 of our over 12's on our overnight trip to Carlingford for a fun filled 2 days of activities like High Ropes Challenge to Kayaking.

Other activities that keep the Youth Office busy include the boys and girls youth groups, football tournaments, cooking and healthy eating classes, First Aid and Youth Café. This year the Youth workers ran an Art



competition themed 'A Traveller's Life' and it was open to all the schools in the Navan Area from 4th class -2nd Years. The Youth Team had a great response for this and displayed all the entries on MTW Open Day during Traveller Pride week. We have continued with our two Youth group nights in the Unity Centre in Windtown as well as the regular one in MTW premises. We now operate a Drop-in Youth Café on a Monday night in Windtown from 6-8pm where we do everything from cooking, playing board games and Art and Crafts.



The Youth Project also takes part in important competitions like Show Racism the Red Card and this is also done at the Youth Café. In 2012 their project (a DVD) was chosen from hundreds of entries to be one of 15 projects to be showcased in The Aviva Stadium in Dublin. There the

Young People got to meet the president Michael D. Higgins.

The Youth Project also operates on a Wednesday where a specific Activity or Programme is run for 8-10 weeks. These Programmes are chosen by the Young People for the Young People. Coming up in 2012 are such projects as Bike Safety, Guitar lessons and Computers to name but a few. This expansion worked well and introduced our service to a new neighbourhood of young people.

Our Young Men's group helped make and design a Flat 4 wheel Cart with the Heritage programme and in 2012 preparations were put into place for a Horse Care project that is starting in early Spring 2013 once a week on a Thursday in Carnaross Farm, dealing with many Traditional values in the Traveller culture, Horse management, First Aid, Safety on the road and of course Horse Care. There are over 110 Young people on our books with a regular turnover of 30-40 young people a week.

Without our Volunteers our Youth Service would not be as productive or as successful as it is. We have members of the public as well as parents volunteer for everything from art lessons to Youth leaders. We held a Volunteer appreciation night in December to thank some of our volunteers.

The Youth work team undertakes training regularly ensuring good practise and high skills in all levels of their work.



Some of the training undertaken this year includes; Diversity in Youth work, Best Practice in Youth Work, Respect Training, ASIST, Youth Mental Health Training, “Let Someone Know” training and a Flexibus driving course.

Community

Our Community Work department have worked very closely throughout 2012 organising Drug Awareness sessions, health information evenings and Christmas activities. We also developed strong links with the Peace and Mediation service in conjunction with the cross border initiative.

The Living History Project has also visited schools throughout the county and further a field; it has been a huge success in promoting awareness on Traveller culture.

The Community Development section also represented Meath Travellers Workshops Ltd at various events and meetings nationally and internationally throughout 2012.

Navan 2 Navan

Michael O’Meara left Brews Hill, Navan, Ireland in 1845 to embark on a trip to Ottawa in Canada where he set up the town of Navan in Ottawa.

Navan2Navan is a new community initiative between the towns of Navan, County Meath, Ireland and Navan, Ottawa, Canada to develop social and business links between the two towns.

As part of this initiative a delegation of people from Navan, Ireland attended the Navan Fair in Navan, Ottawa from August 9th to the 12th, 2012. The fund raising undertaken included a charity auction, table quiz and poker night, which also enabled the group to get to know each other. This was a great mixed community initiative where lifelong friendships were formed.



Navan 2 Navan Ireland Group!

Meath Travellers Workshops Ltd, are very proud to announce that our Youth Worker, Michéal Mac Donnachada , was the Irish speaking representative on the Navan 2 Navan exchange. This is a marvellous achievement for a young Traveller man.

Temple Bar Trad Fest

In January, all roads led to Christ Church place Templebar, for the Dublin Temple bar Trad Fest. MTW were delighted to take our Living History Project along to the festival. We promoted our heritage and culture at the festival and were delighted

with the large number of visitors to see to the Barrel Top Wagon, tin smiting and story telling.



Navan Shamrock Festival

Meath Travellers Workshops again played a crucial role in this event in 2012.

The festival office has now moved back to Meath Travellers Workshops LTD where we are involved in a lot of the organising of the festival including the parade logistics and volunteer management. The festival held a week of events around the town culminating in the biggest and most successful St. Patrick's Day parade the town has ever seen!

Housing Support

Community Worker Ellen McDonagh, has been kept busy all year supporting members of the Travelling community in the Meath area to avail of the local services such as, The Housing Department, at Meath County Council and local housing agencies.

Family Support

Meath Travellers Workshops Ltd continues to provide Family Support. This is particular to Traveller families seeking support when dealing with statutory agencies such as HSE and the Department of Education.



The Community Work section have also been providing support to members of the Travelling community in areas such as Community Welfare, Citizens information, local schools and other public departments. Helping with form filling and speaking to different departments to help with Travellers day to day lives. We are continuing this support into next year.

Wonderful Workshop Women celebrate a Successful International Women's Day

A group of truly wonderful women (and some men!) came together on International Women's Day in Navan to celebrate some local and not so local female heroes.

On Thursday 8th of March in Navan Library, local women's groups exhibited displays on their choice of who they felt was an inspiring woman. Groups taking part included: The Back to Education Initiative, Involve Jigsaw, Involve Unity, Jigsaw, and Meath Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers, the ALPS group, the Joy Women's Group and Youth reach Progression.



Community Activist Rita Fagan accompanied by Louise Levins, Kay McCabe and a representative from Navan Library!

The icons selected by the groups were as varied as the groups themselves, with Mother Teresa, JK Rowling, Katie Taylor and Rosa Parks amongst those championed on the day. The Joy women's group even nominated themselves and made a very good case for why they were their own heroes!

Over 70 people attended the exhibition and heard the special guest speaker, Community Activist Rita Fagan speak about the crucial and unique role women can play in the world. The event was kindly sponsored by Lir Chocolates. All those who attended commented on the vibrant and positive atmosphere in the room and left the morning feeling proud and newly appreciative of the wonderful women in their lives!

The event was organized by Meath Travellers Workshops, Involve Youth Project and Meath Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers.

Inspirational Women at International Girl Guide Camp

The Guides and Guide Leaders attending the Irish Girl Guides International *Camp 101* in July were asked to nominate 101 Inspirational Women. Their images were displayed around the Lough Key Park Roscommon where the camp took place. 101 words were also displayed on why they are inspirational.



The women nominated included Lady Diana, Mother Theresa and Florence Nightingale, but alongside these famous women one of our members of staff, Anne Hyland was enthusiastically nominated and here is what they had to say about her:-

Some people are like a breath of fresh air, and Anne Hyland is the freshest air around! She is so positive and cheerful and faces any challenge with optimism. Anne is a Guide unit Leader in Navan, giving of her time tirelessly on a weekly basis. As a member of IGG's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee, she has represented IGG overseas. Her 'day' job involves working with Irish Travellers in Meath Travellers Workshops to promote cultural diversity and to highlight Traveller identity culture and heritage as something to be proud of.

We are delighted that Anne's voluntary youth work is being celebrated and recognized and that her work with Meath Travellers overflows into the Irish Girl Guides.

Men's Health Group

The Men's Health Group ran for six weeks and ten men took part. The program consisted of different workshops and physical fitness. The workshops were healthy eating, smoking, mental health, alcohol and drugs, domestic violence and men's health. Each workshop was followed by an hour of cardio exercise and took place every Monday evening in Claremont Stadium.



On a Tuesday evening they would have swimming lessons and water polo in Kells swimming pool. They used the minibus for transport. On a Friday they went to the gym where the men took part in spinning classes, weight training and relaxed in the swimming pool and steam rooms when they were finished.

Traveller Ethnicity Conference!

We attended a conference called "Ethnicity and Travellers: an Exploration" being run by the Department of Justice and Equality in Dublin Castle in late September. A panel of guest speakers from academics including Dr Robbie McVeigh, Dr Anastasia Crickley and Traveller speakers Catherine Joyce and Brigid Quilligan.

Irish Travellers have not yet been recognised as an ethnic minority in Ireland and this conference was held to address the issue. Irish Travellers and members of the settled population attended the conference. Speakers discussed the issue of Irish Travellers losing their identity in the next few decades and the consequences this already has on Irish Travellers; for example, the practice of nomadism (moving from place to place in trailers) is no longer practiced as much as it was a few decades back. If Irish Travellers are recognised as an ethnic minority in Ireland, the Irish government will have to preserve our culture.

Breast Cancer Awareness Morning.

On Friday the 26th of October, Community Worker Ellen McDonagh organised a Breast Cancer Awareness coffee morning at Meath Travellers Workshop LTD. Staff, and friends of the Workshops came from as far as Westmeath and beyond to donate buns and cake and show their support to this important cause.



It was not however an all female affair – then MTW men were not found wanting as they bravely volunteered to take part in a sponsored leg and chest wax. Michéal McDonnacha, John McDonagh, Jimmy Power, John Power and Paddy McDonagh put their fears and inhibitions aside and raised a lot of money for Breast Cancer Awareness. There was live Ceili music and lots of conversation and laughter. The coffee morning was a huge success and everyone seemed to enjoy it.

We would like to thank everyone who donated all the delicious buns and cakes, prizes and to everyone who donated money on the day. Your kindness was very much appreciated by all at Meath Travellers Workshops LTD. € 721.81 was raised on the day!

Breaking the Pattern II– International Youth Exchange



Interaction with other peer groups, at home and abroad is very important to us. In early July a group of four Swedish girls from the Muslim/

Kurdish and Swedish community along with two youth leaders came to Ireland. This exchange followed on from our Irish group going to Sweden last year as part of the international project called “Breaking the Pattern” which examines women’s roles in each community.

During this week the girls participated in a wide range of activities. They went to Balrath Woods, Causey farm, Tara Hill, Newgrange and Knowth and to Dublin where they did a scavenger hunt and went to the cinema, they also enjoyed a pamper evening. Both Swedish and Irish girls talked about our cultures, traditions and the similarities and differences between their cultures. They found that Irish Travellers and Muslim communities would have more in common in terms of births and marriages and the rearing of girls and the roles of women within our communities.

Michael McDonagh gave a talk on the origins of Traveller culture and some of our practices and beliefs. The Swedish girls were particularly interested in this.

The Swedish girls attended a birthday party of an Irish Traveller. Here they got to meet a group of Irish Travellers varying in age. The evening was really enjoyed around a camp fire where both Swedish and Irish Travellers shared stories and folklore and played music. The evening was extremely enjoyable for everyone.



Some comments from the girls:

“I had a really nice week, I got more friends and it was really funny. I have done a lot of things that I don’t do at home in Sweden. Thank you for everything. Had a really, really nice week with you.”

“Everyone has really taken very good care of us! Thank you very much” Emilie

“I had a brilliant week and great fun. I would do this programme again” Katie

“I’d a brilliant time there was great activities.”

“We got to know a lot of the girls a lot more when they were telling their stories. It was a very good week.”

“I really liked getting to see the girls again. We talked about our cultures and the similarities’ and difference’s, Muslim girls and Traveller girls have a similar culture and I found I had a lot in common with them. I love when other Travellers came over and the Swedish girls got to meet them. Older Travellers told them stories about years ago and they seemed really interested, they also shared experiences. There was music and laughter. Overall an extremely enjoyable week and I hope to keep in contact with our Swedish friends.”

Social Inclusion Week

On Thursday the 25th of October, Meath Travellers Workshops LTD held a photo and factual presentation in Navan Shopping Centre. Staff Sinead Burke and Mandy Shaw were on hand throughout the day and created the presentation “Many Faces of Meath”. It had wonderful photographs of different groups and individuals from all over Co. Meath and many facts about Meath that we ourselves did not know. After a few minor hiccups the presentation went off without hitch!



Information Services

The Information Office in MTW Ltd has a very busy workload. Sinead Burke, the Information Officer is ably assisted by Melissa McDonagh. The office generates press releases and runs a media monitoring service and is also responsible for producing many reports and booklets to promote Meath Travellers Workshops work. The office has also taken over minding and updating our mobile displays which are themed on MTW’s different areas of work and are incredibly useful when we are asked to visit other groups.



Tara Festival of the High Kings

As part of the national Gathering initiative in 2013, Meath Travellers Workshops are planning their most high profile and ambitious project yet. On September 14th 2013, the workshops (with other community groups) will be holding a Celtic Re-enactment Festival on the Hill of Tara. This festival is being overseen by Sinead. Working with the Gardai, the

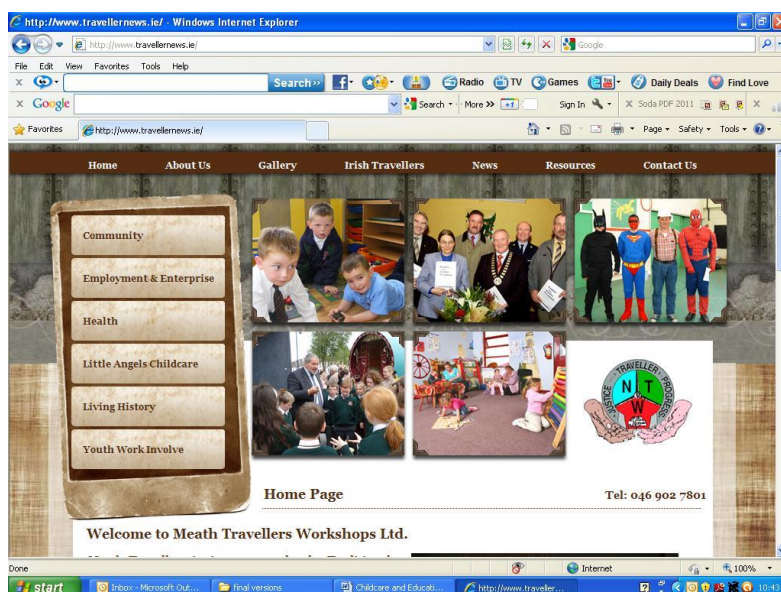
GAA, the Hill of Tara Foundation and others, this event will offer a very high profile for the Workshops both nationally and internationally. The work began in earnest in September 2012 and has garnered great support and enthusiasm from the public at home and abroad. Already the festival has been chosen as a signature Gathering event and has been covered in the Boston Globe newspaper and on the American website Irish Central.com

Newsletters

As well as assisting Sinead with the festival, Melissa produces the MTW newsletter every two months and has also taken over the responsibility of writing the Annual Report.

www.travellernews.ie

This website which has sections detailing all our activities, facilities, news and achievements continues to attract visitors each month. It is a very attractive and colourful site which is easy to navigate and can be updated easily and efficiently from the Information office. The information department is also responsible for updating and expanding our heritage website www.travellerheritage.ie .



MTW Ltd. Mobile Information and Support Service

Due to lack of funding this service came off the road for good in March 2011. A lot of time was spent during 2011 and 2012 exploring different options on how to revive the project. The Workshops had talks with the Citizens' Information Board and Traveller MABs though sadly they came to nothing. The information van was unfortunately a casualty of our new economic landscape.

Outreach Work

An important part of the Information Offices work during 2012 was engaging productively and positively with several local committees. These included: Meath Social Inclusion Measures Group, RAPID and the Cultur Intercultural Committee. Our presence on each of these groups allow us advocate on Meath Travellers behalf and also informs us of what other groups are doing. From this engagement meant we have struck up very good practical relationships with other organisations which compliments our work greatly.

"An Tinceir - Craft of the Tinsmith" Booklet Launch a Great Success

Even the hazy rain couldn't dampen the spirits of the large crowd assembled at Trim Castle on Tuesday 26th of June to launch a very unique book.

Meath Travellers Workshops used the last day of Traveller Pride week to officially introduce "'An Tinceir - Craft of the Tinsmith" to some very special invited guests including local school children and local representatives.

MTW had set up their acclaimed Living History Project as part of the launch display. This includes a Barrel Top Wagon, Shelter Tents and campfire.

Though as interesting and educational as the exhibits were, many visitors were more than glad to test how waterproof the Wagon and Tents are. They proved as practical as they were nostalgic in the wet weather.



"'An Tinceir - Craft of the Tinsmith" details the history, tools and skills used by traditional Traveller Tinsmiths over the years. Through photographs taken throughout the MTW tinsmith training programme, the publication is a step by step guide to teach readers how to produce buckets, tankards and plates themselves. The launch was a busy morning with many events crammed into the schedule:

Successful graduates of the most recent Tinsmith course in the workshops, were presented with certificates of achievement by Cllr William Blyth, chair of Trim Town Council. Local Deputy Ray Butler TD presented the two tinsmith tutors, James Collins and Tom McDonnell with special commemorative photographs.

MTW Community worker Louise Levins, who compiled the book, spoke briefly about how she enjoyed sitting in on the course and getting to know the tutors and participants.

Finally, Dr Fidelma Mullane, representing the Heritage Council, formally launched the book and congratulated MTW on their work preserving and promoting Traveller Heritage.

MTW wishes to thank everyone who braved the rain to attend the event. The book is available for download from

www.travellernews.ie .

For any further information please contact the Workshops of 046 90 27801

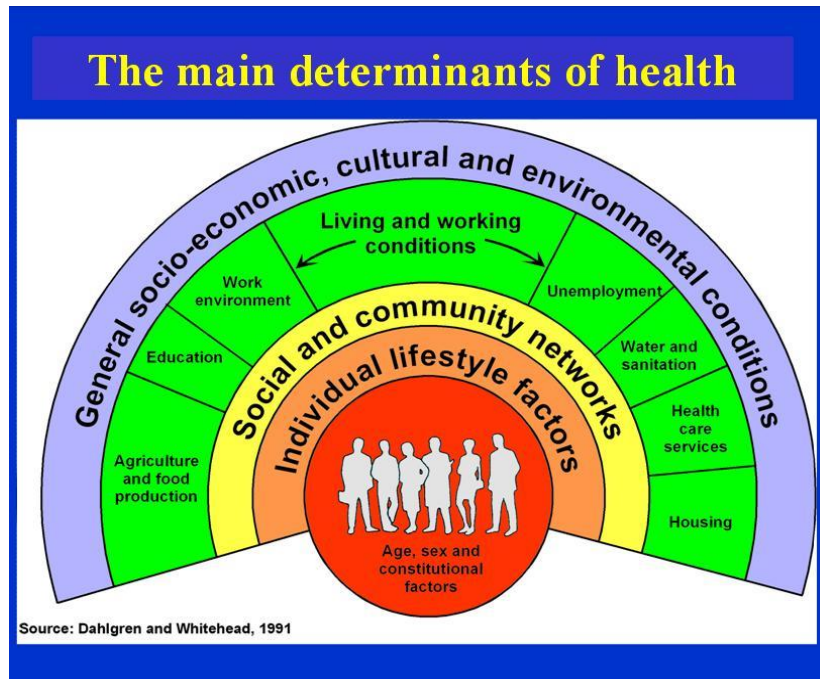


Traveller Pride Week—Tuesday 26th June 2012

Living History Event and Launch of Book—*The Craft of the Tinsmith 'An Taisear'* at Trim Castle, Co. Meath

Health

The recommendations from the All Ireland Traveller Health Study reinforce the ‘Wider Determinants of Health’ model. This model recognises that our health experience is influenced not only by our genes and lifestyle, but also by our opportunities and wider social, cultural and physical environments. See diagram below:-



This is the approach that informs the work of Meath Travellers Workshops. MTW continues to promote activities that support Travellers in their day to day lives, encourage representation on issues affecting Travellers, and portray a positive image in the community along with celebrating Traveller culture and heritage.

All Ireland Traveller Health Study



The “All Ireland Traveller Health Study, Summary of Findings” (Sept 2010) confirmed the poorer health experience of members of the Traveller Community compared to the settled community. It highlighted various specific areas for concern and made several recommendations for action. What the study provided is a **strong evidence base** of the health inequalities experienced by the Traveller Community. It also called strongly for **the translation of this evidence into action**. This call remains unanswered by government and continues to be lobbied for by the Traveller Community.

Some key facts from the study are highlighted below:-

Traveller Life Expectancy –

Travellers are dying younger than general population.

- The gap in life expectancy between Traveller women and settled women is 11.5 years, (slightly improved from the 1987 study figure which was 12).
- The gap in life expectancy between Traveller men and settled men is 15.1 years, (worse than the 1987 study figure which was then 10 years difference).

Mortality

- Traveller women have three times the mortality rate of the general population and Traveller men have four times the mortality rate of the general population.
- Suicide in the Traveller community is 6 times the rate of the general population.
- Infant mortality (death rate) is 3.6 times the rate of the general population.

Main causes of death

- Heart Disease / Stroke – 25%
- Cancer – 19%
- Respiratory Disease – 13%

Social Determinants

- 4.8% of Travellers in ROI and 14.5% in NI either employed or self-employed
- In ROI 38.5% of 30-44 year old Travellers and 25.8% of 45-64 year old Travellers had primary education only
- In NI 26.2% of 30-44 year olds and 18.4% of 45-64 year olds had primary education only
- The majority of respondents, (75.9% in ROI and 94.3% in NI), lived in family units of 5 or less.
- Difficulty in reading in 28.8% of Traveller families in the ROI and 33.5% of NI families

Lifestyle

- Of those tested in the last 12 months a quarter were diagnosed as having High Cholesterol and over a third had High Blood Pressure.
- 66.3% said that illicit drug use is a problem in the community.
- 30.9% Travellers said price is a factor which prevents them to eat healthy.
- Overall there is a 15% higher rate of smoking among Travellers compared to the general population.

Adult Health Services.

- Barriers identified were waiting list (62.7% ROI and 46.8% NI), embarrassment (47.8% ROI and 50.1% NI) and lack of information (37.3% ROI and 28.6% NI)
- Complete trust in health professional (41.0% ROI and 34.6% NI) was lower than general population (82.7%)

Value of Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects

Health Information

- 83% of the Travellers interviewed said they got their health information and advice from Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects and the Travellers organisations.

Women's Health

- 25% of Traveller women compared to 13% of general population had a breast screening.
- 23% of the Travellers had Smear test compared to 12% of general population.

Social Capital

- Importance and pride in Traveller identity and culture
- Very good support within family and community
- Extended family networks
- Strong sense of community
- Empowerment of Traveller women
- A community open to adapting to change
- High level of trust within the Traveller community relative to the settled

The value of the above information lies in what way it is used by government to alter policy or plan strategic action for change. Without such commitment from government and its servants, the poorer health experience of Travellers will continue and more lives will be lost.

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study recommendations are summarised below:-

- A strategic action plan should be set out, with a firm commitment to implementation, targets and timeframes.
- Adequacy of accommodation is essential to ensure health improvement for Travellers.
- Improve educational outcomes and opportunities to be on a par with the general population within 10 years.
- Strong attention should be given to adult education.

- Address issues of negative stereotyping about Travellers and promote a more rounded understanding. Including a National exhibition of Traveller culture.
- Develop an appropriate employment policy for Travellers.
- Health & education professionals have a module on “Traveller health status and customs” in their curricula.
- Hospitals with a significant Traveller catchment population should include a section on Travellers in their staff induction programmes etc.

Community Development Health Worker

During 2012, our Community Development Health Worker, Louise Levins, worked with the organisation on a number of initiatives. Louise has been employed by Meath Travellers Workshops since late 2005. Her position is split between working directly with Community Health Workers in the Meath Primary Health Care Project for Travellers and supporting her colleagues in Meath Travellers Workshops. Louise works with colleagues to support the development of health related learning opportunities and other initiatives for the Traveller community. Some of the activities undertaken with colleagues in MTW during 2012 include:-

Breast Health Information

Development of Breast Cancer information to support MTW fundraising event developed with Community Health Workers in Meath Primary Healthcare Project. The event took place on Friday 26th October in MTW offices and substantial funds were raised for the Irish Cancer Society.



**BREAST CANCER
AWARENESS**





**TEA
AND
CAKE**

**Coffee/
Tea
& Treat
€3**

Friday 26th October 10.00am - 12.30pm

Coffee Morning & Sponsored Leg Wax

Proceeds to Irish Cancer Society

All Welcome

**Meath Travellers Workshops,
Fairgreen, Navan, Co. Meath.**



October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

How familiar are you with your breasts?
We all should be aware of what is normal for our breasts and the changes that take place at different times of the month as texture and feel varies from women to women.

Remember that most breast changes are not cancerous and are harmless. All changes need to be checked by your Doctor. When your Doctor examines your breasts she or he may be able to reassure you that there is nothing to worry about. The change could be connected with your hormones. Your Doctor may ask you to come back at a different stage in your menstrual cycle (ie between periods) to check your breasts again. You may be sent to a specialist Breast Clinic for a more detailed examination. Don't worry that you may be making an unnecessary fuss.

All changes need to be checked out and could save your life. It is important to remember that nine out of ten breast lumps are harmless.

What puts you at risk of Breast Cancer?

- Being a woman.
- Getting older.
- Having a history of breast cancer in your family.
- Long term use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
- Starting your periods at a very young age and starting menopause later.
- Your lifestyle. Drinking too much Alcohol, Being overweight after menopause.
- Not exercising enough.

Changes of the breast that need to be checked by your doctor

- Lumps or thickening in the breast tissue.
- Swelling in your breast or armpit.
- Dimpling or flaking on the skin, or creases on the skin.
- Prominent veins on your breast.
- Unusual pain or discomfort or heavy persistent pain in your breast.
- Any new changes in the appearance of the breasts.
- Change in size or shape of your breasts.

Breast cancer
Breast cancer is uncommon in women under the age of 35 and very rare under the age of 25. From around 40 yrs. of age it does get more common.


Women are encouraged to avail of the **Breast Check** service.

Breast Check is a free special x-ray of the breast, known as a mammogram. It is funded by the government and offered to all women age 50 to 64 every two years even if you have no medical card it is still free. If you are of age 50 to 64 and have not been called you can contact breast check on 1800 45 45 55




See overleaf

Prepared by Meath Primary Health Care Project for Travellers, October 2011



What To Do If You Find Something
Go to your GP immediately. Your GP may refer you to a specialist **Breast Clinic** if s/he wants further tests. At this unit you may have a 'Triple Assessment' which involves doing some tests which may include:-

Biopsy
If you have a lump on your breast your doctor or surgeon may need to do a biopsy this means getting a sample of tissue from your lump to examine under a microscope there are two main ways of doing this:-
- A small bit of tissue is removed from the lump under local anaesthetic using a hollow needle.
- Your doctor or surgeon may also decide to remove the whole lump. This is called an excision biopsy and it normally takes a few days for the result to come through.

Mammogram
A mammogram is an x-ray examination of the breasts the person that takes this x-ray is called a radiographer. They take at least two images of the breast - one is taken from above and the other is taken at a 45 degree angle. To do this kind of x-ray you have to place your breasts between two plastic surfaces. This can be very uncomfortable but you should really try and tolerate it as the compression reduces radiation, separates overlapping tissues and can make the difference between finding or missing breast cancer.

Ultrasound
An Ultrasound examination is where a jelly like substance is rubbed on to the breast and the ultrasound transmitter is moved over the breast. This scan is very similar to a scan a woman would have done when pregnant except it is over the breast, pictures appear on the screen and it is watched by a person called a radiologist. They can take pictures of the breast as it is happening. This is a painless test other than feeling cold and sticky from the gel.

Did you know?

- Early diagnosis is a key to overcoming breast cancer.
- More than 1,700 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in Ireland each year.
- Irish women have a 1 in 12 chance of developing breast cancer in their lifetime.
- 74% of Irish women with breast cancer discovered the lump themselves.
- Only about five to ten per cent of breast cancers are believed to have a family link.
- The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age. Approximately 80% of breast cancers occur in women over 50 years.
- Around 14 men develop breast cancer in Ireland each year.
- If breast cancer is found early, treatment is likely to be less extensive and more successful.

Information / Resources
For more information or to arrange a video talk session from **Meath Primary Health Care Project for Travellers**, call 045 90 71679.

For information and to receive an action **Breast Cancer** pack call 1800 30 30 40. If you have any concerns about **Breast Check** and want to talk to someone call 1800 45 45 55.

Also if you have concerns the **National Cancer Helpline** will allow you to talk to a specialist cancer nurse call 1800 200 700.

Interested in Fundraising see 'getthegirl.ie'

Prepared by Meath Primary Health Care Project for Travellers, October 2011

Employment and Training

Community Employment Programme

Our Community Employment Programme provides a viable work force for all sections of Meath Travellers Workshops.

During 2012 the CE programme offered work experience and training to 21 participants in the following areas:

- Childcare
- Youth Work
- Community Development
- Heritage
- Reception/Clerical
- Cleaning and Maintenance
- Library
- Information
- Administration



All participants receive hands on work experience in their area, as well as FETAC certified training throughout the year. This programme is designed to increase progression into mainstream employment and fulltime education and training. During 2012 participants gained certification in subjects such as Childcare, Business Admin and Reception Skills, Security, Manual handling and safety training and Payroll training.

Progression

In 2012 we had a progression rate of 50% of our learners getting into either full-time or part-time employment.

Work Experience Opportunities for Students

Volunteers and Students regularly request placements with our organisation. Following on from a Volunteer Management Training course we attended through Meath Volunteer Centre, we have now in place a simple contract to ensure that the expectations of the volunteer and ourselves are clear from the outset.

For students on placement, there is a structured plan in place to explore and enable them to see all areas of our work. After which they are encouraged to decide themselves if they would like to plan and deliver an initiative in a particular area. During 2012 we facilitated placements from the following institutions: Navan Youthreach Foundation, Progression and Hi-way Café, Kells Youthreach, Cavan IT, NUI Maynooth, BTEI, Athlone IT and the Probation Service.

Meath Traveller Employment Initiative

MTEI has had a productive year; we engaged with over 62 clients and managed to get 17 clients into Employment/Temp Contracts. Clients also completed various training courses like manual handling, Door and Static Security, Safe PASS and First Aid. Some clients went back to Further Education, attending Drogheda and Cavan Institute as well as attending various courses through the VEC in Navan. By doing the courses the clients are improving their skills and making them more job ready. Other Travellers that registered with MTEI took on Internships and CE positions in the county of Meath.



The MTEI Service helps Travellers who are looking to get into employment; holding one to one meetings, identifying their skills and interests and matching them to suitable job roles. We also offer advice on appropriate training and Education opportunities. We support the individual with pre-employment guidance and support, supporting with application process (CVS, cover letters, interview skills and preparation).

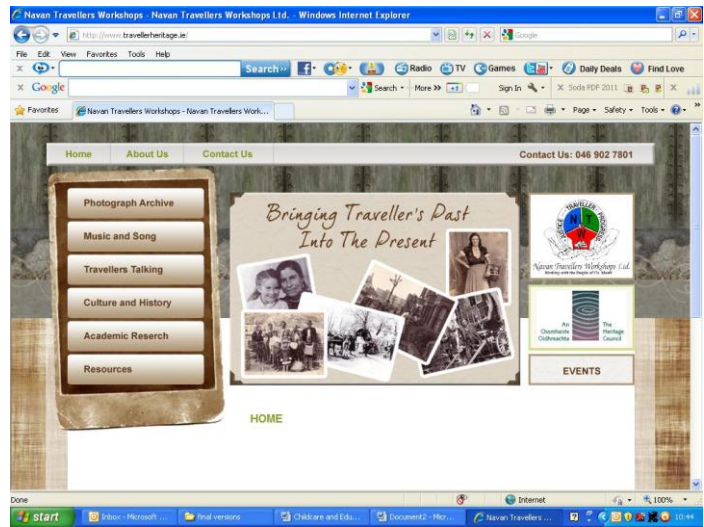
We also contact employers on the behalf of the jobseeker therefore giving the employer a background of the candidate before interviewing and selling them to the employer.

Heritage

In many ways our Heritage programme is the jewel in the crown of MTW's work. It certainly attracts the most interest from the public, both Traveller and settled and is as enjoyable as it is important.

www.travellerheritage.ie

Our ground breaking website, www.travellerheritage.ie still attracts on average over 2000 visitors per month. The site was totally redesigned in 2010 and the early part of 2011 was spent updating the photo section and ironing out a few tweaks.



Through our visits with The Living History Project we have created new links with photographers' families who have collections from the grandparents and relatives collection. This photographs will prove a very rich and valuable source to our website and connecting Traveller families to their past. We are very pleased to form this new links. In total we now have nearly 1000 photos in our online archive; many more will go live in 2013 and attract a lot of attention on the site.

Hector Goes.....Traveller

Meath Travellers Workshops Ltd had a visit from Navan native Hector Ó hEochagáin as part of his four part RTÉ series Hector Goes. Hector linked in with MTW staff Michael and Ellen who were once his first Irish Traveller neighbours when they first camped in Navan. Hector had like many seen other shows about Irish Travellers and Gypsies that have created many negative images and caused stereotypes about the Irish Travellers.

“Enough with the big dresses and the bare knuckles and the sulky races - what Hector wants to know



is whatever happened to the Irish traveller? Are there any left out there? And if there are any out there, well, could they please tell Hector what being an Irish Traveller actually means? So circle the wagons, throw another log on the fire, take a seat and listen up. You're about to learn a thing or two.” (rte.ie, 2013)

Hector put all negative images aside and wanted to know the real Irish Traveller, the Irish Traveller on a daily basis. Hector met with a large number of Travellers from various families. He dealt with many serious issues within the Irish Travelling community in a very sensitive and acceptable way. Overall Hector challenged the negative media attention facing Traveller culture from other TV shows. Hector portrayed an extremely positive image and will remain a friend to us here at MTW. He has since mentioned this organization many times on his radio show.



Sitting around the campfire in the dark!



Michael McDonagh tells a tale to local school children

Traveller Tales

Traveller Tales unfortunately did not go ahead last year. This exciting and worthwhile project is by no means on the shelf. A renewed commitment on Traveller Tales will take effect in the coming year.

We applied to the Heritage Council for funding to enable us to record older traditional style Traveller story tellers.

We planned to record 10 older Travellers in their homes recounting old stories that would have been popular around campfires of times past. The footage would then be available on our new online video channel, “Traveller Tales”. This channel would sit beside our current heritage site. The video will be hosted on You Tube and then linked to the new story telling site at www.travellerheritage.ie/travellertales. We feel that Traveller Tales will help preserve the skill of story telling and the stories themselves among the Travelling Community and will build on Meath Travellers Workshops excellent reputation as an accessible and trusted resource for anyone interested in learning about Traveller heritage.

Living History

Our Barrel Top wagon forms the centre piece of our Living History project. The wagon, complete with story teller, tin-smith, campfire and tent brings this part of Traveller culture to life in an entertaining and educational way. The Living History project has visited a number of schools, traditional fairs and organisations over the past year. This project has become very effective in delivering its message.

The Living History project is becoming extremely popular at the Traditional Heritage Fairs in Meath and its surrounding counties. We now find ourselves being approached by different organizations and schools which are very much welcomed by Meath Traveller Workshops Ltd. In 2013 we intend to add a four wheeler to the project. The four wheeler is a big undertaking and will be of huge importance to the Living History Project.



During 2012 our Living History project visited over 25 events, including the following fairs & schools:- Meath Beo Temple Bar, Loretto Convent Navan, St Francis Priorswood School Cooloch, The Square Darndale, Tullyvin Fair, Dunderry Fair, Nobber Fair, Filming with Channel 5 ‘When Paddy met Sally’, the week long Ecumenical Congress RDS, Scurlogstown Trim, Mansion House – Traveller Pride Week Dublin, Croke Park – National Traveller

Drugs Taskforce Conference, Trim Castle for Tinsmith book launch, Backdrop for Music DVD ‘Rand’, Scoil Mhuire Dunleer, St Josephs Navan, Bush School Dundalk, Comhairle na nOg and Gateshead Youth Exchange.

Traveller Heritage Park, Carnaross, Kells, Co Meath

In 2006, farmer Bryan Kearney bequeathed a large part of his farm to Meath Travellers Workshops. With nearly 70 acres of land to fill, MTW decided to commission a Feasibility study which would help us decide what to do with the property. This report looked at all aspects of our current work, our strengths, weaknesses and the layout of the land.



The old farmhouse on the Carnaross land

Most importantly it looked into what would benefit the Travelling community but also considering the local people of the area. This research was carried out through discussion forums which included Travellers and locals from the area. The report also compared what was on offer in other heritage parks around Ireland. We feel that our Traveller Heritage Park will be a unique experience for all visitors both Traveller and the wider community.

We are continuing to renovate and repair the house in Carnaross. It's taking a lot of time, energy and valuable resources. We have been fortunate with CE participants who have worked extremely hard working on the barn and the house. It is our aim to provide a valuable interactive, educational and entertaining facility.

Future Plans

- Allotments and produce for sale
- Horsemanship, stabling and pasture facilities
- Tinsmithing workshops
- Tin craft production for sale
- Tea shop for visitors
- Traditional skills workshops
- Traveller Heritage exhibition
- Experience living as a Traveller from the 1950's and sleep in a shelter tent or barrel top wagon
- Housing the Traveller Heritage Photographic archive
- Training and conference facilities

Meath Travellers Workshops

Navan Travellers Workshops Ltd trading as Meath Travellers Workshops is a voluntary Community Development Organisation. Since 1965 it has been a partnership of Travellers and Settled people working together to improve and enhance the social and economic situation of the Travelling community in Co. Meath.

Our Mission Statement

Meath Travellers Workshops is proud to be a Traveller-led community development organisation that is approachable and accessible to all. We cherish and promote Traveller values and identity, and through partnership, training and education, seek to promote equality for all.

The aims of Meath Travellers' Workshops are:

- To prevent the erosion of the economic base of Travellers.
- To enable participation of Travellers in the Education system.
- To develop Programmes that will encourage ownership and empowerment.
- To promote respect for Traveller identity and culture.
- To provide sufficient validation to create an atmosphere of self-determination and reduce dependency.

Our Credo is as follows:

“We recognise that meaningful change for Travellers can only take place when we have both the skills and confidence to organise ourselves and articulate our own needs and this Organisation can best achieve this by supporting the appropriate inclusion of Travellers with area-based Programmes of Local, Social & Economic development”.

Statement of Director's Responsibilities:

Company law requires the Directors to prepare Financial Statements for each year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company for that year. In preparing those Financial Statements, the Directors are required to:

Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. Prepare financial statements on a going-concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper Books of Account, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the Company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Acts 1963 to 1990. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Acknowledgements

Funding & Support

The continued work of Meath Travellers Workshops relies on funding and support from a wide range of sources which is crucial to our operations. We appreciate both the funding and our excellent relationships with all our sponsors. Some of these include:-

FAS, HSE, Pobal, Dept of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Leargas “Youth in Action” Programme, National Development Plan, the Heritage Council, the Loreto Foundation, Meath County Council, County Meath VEC, Meath Partnership, Involve, Crann Support Services, Department of the Environment and Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform.

Links to other organisations

We are also delighted to link in with local, regional, national and international organisations. Some of these include:-

Local *Cultur, Navan Springboard, LTACC (Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee), Local Traveller Health Advisory Committee, Comhairle Na nOg, SIM (Social Inclusion Measure) group, Youth and Family Support Forum, Meath Youth Federation, St Mary’s Parish, Claremont Stadium, Meath Local Sports Partnership, Rapid, Navan Girl Guides, Meath County Childcare Committee, Kells Peoples Resource Centre, Trim and Navan Family Resource Centres, Navan Library, Navan Town Council, Navan Shamrock Festival, Rehabcare, Meath Primary Healthcare Project, Navan Travellers Education Centre, Unity Centre Windtown, Meath Interagency Strategy for the Support and Delivery of Services to the Traveller Community, Joint Policing Committee, Citizens Information, Jobmatters, Dunderry Fair, Youthreach, Scurlogstown Olympiad Trim*

Regional *Traveller Health Unit, Regional Traveller Drugs & Alcohol Forum, Traveller Suicide Working group, Regional Drugs Voluntary Cluster Group, Border Counties Childcare Network, Dundalk Institute of Technology*

National *National Travellers Health Network, Barnardos, Irish Traveller Movement, Pavee Point, The Wheel, National Traveller CDP Network, National Travellers Health Network, National Traveller Health Study, Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative,*

International *Fritsforvaltningen Karlstad Kommun Sweden and Grenzenlos, amongst many others.....*

*And we must not forget... **Thank You!***

Management and Staff of Meath Travellers Workshops Ltd 2012

Board of Directors	Staff
Joe Reilly – Chairperson	Manager - Michael McDonagh
John McDonagh	Secretary - Anne Hyland
Catriona McDonagh	Finance Officer – Tracy Donohue
Jenny D’Arcy	Little Angels Childcare co-ordinator - Marie McDonagh
Julie Power	Youth Work Co-ordinator – Kay McCabe
Kathleen Connors	Youth Worker – Micheal Mac Donnachada
Marie Daly	Community Development and Heritage Worker – Ellen McDonagh
Kathleen McDonagh	Community Development Health Worker – Louise Levins
Ellen McDonagh (Company Secretary)	Community and Development and Outreach Worker – Sinead Burke
Paddy Pryle (Treasurer)	Community Employment Supervisor – Peter Martin
Additional members for the Board of Management	MTEI Facilitator – Leisa Colligan
Barbara Bolger	
Leonard Callaghan	
Louise Clinton	
Nathanya McDonagh	There are also 21 Community Employment Participants working in MTW Ltd.