

Annual Report 2013



Navan Travellers Workshops Ltd trading as

Meath Travellers Workshops

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www.travellernews.ie

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Foreword

2013 was another year which saw Meath Travellers Workshops punch well above its weight in terms of exciting and innovative projects, positive impact on the Meath Travelling community and national lobbying to enhance Travellers situation in Ireland.

Budget cuts continued this year and they did affect us, however I must commend all staff, management and volunteers for the way they dug deep to take on challenges with imagination and resolve.



As this Annual Report illustrates, our work load increased yet again this year, however as staff thought outside the box in how to overcome spending constraints, an exciting and original programme of events emerged of which I am very proud of.

Our largest event this year was the Tara High Kings Festival. This one day heritage re-enactment fair was held on the Hill of Tara and attracted over 2000 visitors, some coming from as far away as Russia and the USA. It was a huge amount of work which strengthened our position as a progressive and committed heritage group. The festival earned us the twin accolades of being picked as a Signature Gathering Event and Best Gathering Event in the Meath Business and Tourism awards.

Another example of how our reputation as a national leader in preserving and promoting Traveller Heritage and Culture is also illustrated by our work on the National Traveller Heritage Park. Work has started on transforming this stretch of land outside of Kells into facility which will eventually house Traveller crafts workshops, horsecare, allotments and wagon making facilities.

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



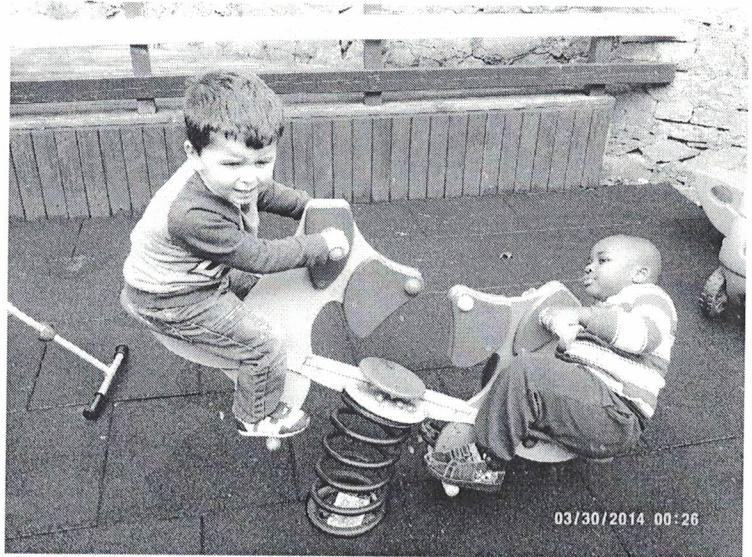
Pre-School

The Pre-School sessions cater for 6 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, Halloween themed buns and mini pizzas to name but a few.

The pre-school children took part in the Summer Project which took place in July where they visited 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 19 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 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 supports 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 Mc Cabe 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 Youth Project also takes part in important competitions like Show Racism



the Red Card and this is also done at the Youth Café.

The Youth Project operates on a Wednesday where a specific activity or programme is run for 8-10 weeks. These programmes are chosen by the young people themselves.

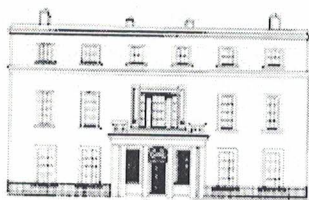
Some of the highlights of our 2013 activities included Bike Safety, Guitar lessons, Office Mural, Witches Hovel, Gardening, Mystery Trips and Santa's Grotto.

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 hard throughout 2013 organising Drug Awareness sessions, health information evenings Halloween and Christmas activities. We have developed strong links with the Peace and Mediation service in conjunction with the cross border initiative. The Community Development section also represented Meath Travellers Workshops Ltd at various events and meetings nationally and internationally throughout 2013



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Cuts in recent years in support services such as the Visiting Teacher programme, coupled with the current economic crisis has led to MTW stepping in to the breach to cover areas previously overseen by statutory agencies.

Family Liaison Officer and Housing Support

Our Community Development Officer Ellen Mc Donagh acted as a liaison between families and schools, in regards to enrolling children who might have just moved to the area and children starting school and other issues. Ellen also liaised with Meath County Council in regards to housing and accommodation and with private Landlords as regards to Rent Allowance and obtaining housing for Travellers who might not have had the confidence to approach such entities on their own

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. We 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.

HSE

Medical cards and Home Care Assistance was also another major issue dealt with by the department this year in regards to people obtaining medical cards and renewals and also for the more vulnerable members of the Travelling Community who require that little bit of extra help and support that they both need and deserve.



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OF HEALTH & CHILDREN
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Cultural Awareness

We have also played a major role in cultural awareness training in the various prisons around the country in a bid to build confidence and self-esteem and keep the Traveller culture alive within the prison population. This work also aims to give prisoners a better outlook on life when they do get released from prison.



There is now a great communication programme between Travellers and the Gardai which helps build positive relations between both groups and aims to stop the negative attitudes sometimes incurred from both sides.

These positive relationships aim to keep more people out of trouble and in turn less people entering in to the Prison system.

Trim Activities

A number of new groups have been introduced in the Trim area most notably the **Women's Group** which is a social outlet for the local Traveller women and helps to build confidence and build relations between different family groups also.

The Involve Youth Group have also set up a branch in Trim and runs on certain nights during the week which is an outlet for the youth of the area to get together somewhere other than on the streets and provides them with skills of interacting and sharing and learning from one another!



Navan Shamrock Festival 2013

Meath Travellers Workshops again played a crucial role in this event in 2013. The festival office is based in Meath Travellers Workshops, 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. This year the Parade headed off from Carriage Road as there was building work in the Enterprise Centre.



During the Festival Navan2Navan hosted some visitors from Navan Canada. They had a wonderful time and were treated to a Tractor drawn sightseeing ride around Navan and the surrounding areas, whilst sitting on the MTW float.

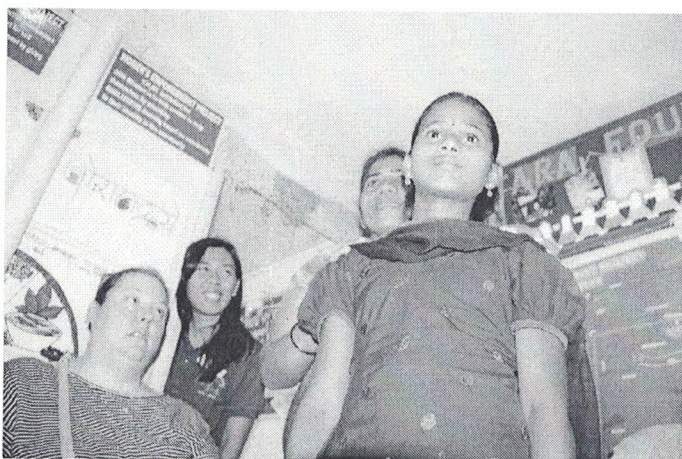
This float formed part

of the St Patrick's Day Parade and advertised the Tara High Kings Festival. We were honoured to have the Grand Marshall of the Parade, Miriam McKenna from Flexibus ride on our float, together with some wheelchair users, who would use the Flexibus service. They were delighted to actually be part of the Parade as normally all they get to do is watch.

Green Tara Foundation and Save the Girl Child March in India

Our Secretary and local Girl Guide Leader Anne Hyland enjoyed a visit to India to take part in community project called 'Gifts for Change', based in Sangam the World Girl Guide Centre. Anne gave up her Christmas and New Year break in order to take part. This included an inspirational visit to the Green Tara Foundation where she met the passionate founder and director Dr. Mandan Mune.

The Green Tara Foundation's mission is to help women to help themselves,



particularly as women are oppressed in the male orientated Indian culture. They provide training in subjects including life skills like opening a bank account, self-awareness, and legal awareness, self-defense in situations of general attack, arts crafts and gender awareness.

The Gifts for Change group were impressed by this organization and decided that together they would buy a sewing machine for the young girl they had met. Once they had collected their money together they had enough for two sewing machines with a little left over.

The community programme also included organizing a Dental Health event for some of the Green Tara girls that live in the slums of Pune, India.

The Dental Hygiene event that the Gifts for Change group organised centred around dental hygiene

and a visit to a dentist for a check-up, with an opportunity for follow up dental treatment - all for free, this was a special opportunity provided by a local dentist. The Gifts For Change group organised extra activities for the day, how to clean your teeth properly (this included each girl being given a free toothbrush and toothpaste), nutrition – (many people in India are vegetarian and suffer from anaemia, so the idea was to learn about high protein vegetarian food), hand washing including a game about how germs can spread, how to make jewellery from recycled material (which they could sell as a fundraiser), exercise – Bollywood and Zumba dance, and a chance to practice their English. Typical though, the highlight for the girls was to get to swim in Sangams' swimming pool, Girls will be girls!



It is sad to say, but we hear in the news more about gender selection taking place all over the world, so Anne and the staff and visitors from Sangam were delighted to join the Save the Girl Child March—They joined thousands of boys and girls, men and women, including youth representatives from all over India, to march through the streets of Pune India.



During the march Anne and the other women were taught Hindi chants, and given the honour of being present for the reading of the event declaration, an International commitment to furthering the health, safety, and status of young girls in India.

Anne said 'I could talk for hours about the wonderful time I had in India, it was a privilege to have this was a once

in a lifetime chance to take part in a community project in India and stay in Sangam. I would recommend it to anyone, better than any package holiday!’ she continued ‘I felt a connection with Green Tara Foundation. I had already raised funds in Ireland and I hope to continue to fund raise for them, particularly living near the Hill of Tara’.

For more about where Anne went:

<http://www.sangamworldcentre.org/en/about/community/arya>

www.irishgirlguides.ie

Information Services

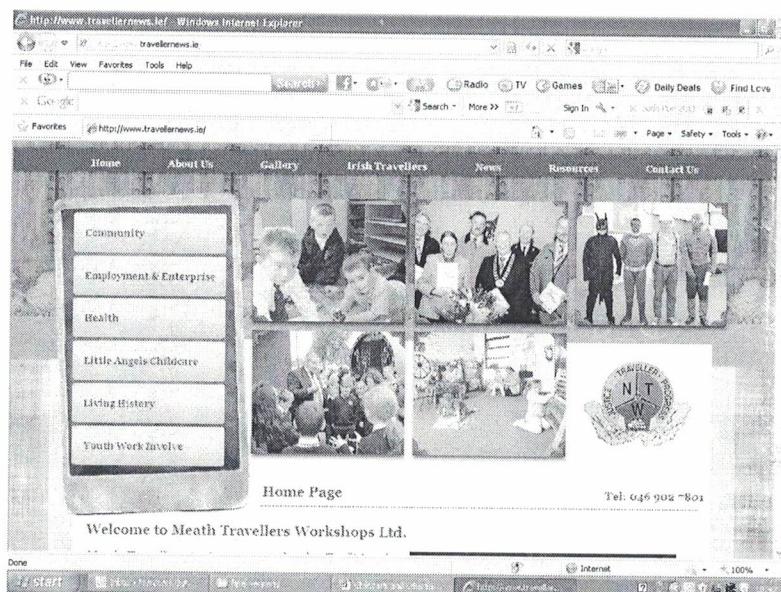
The Information Office in MTW Ltd has a very busy workload. Sinead Burke, the Information Officer was ably assisted by Melissa McDonagh until the end of September. Following this, Anita McGovern stepped in and is also doing a great job. The office generates press releases and runs a media monitoring 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.

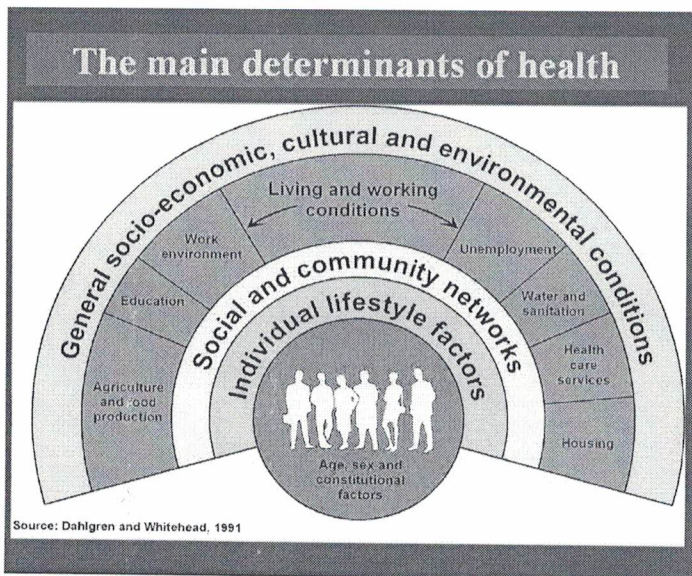
Newsletters

Newsletters continued to be produced every two months this year. Copies are available for download on www.travellernews.ie

www.travellernews.ie

This website which has sections detailing all our activities, facilities, news and achievements continues to attract visitors each month. It





Within the role, Louise continues to seek opportunities for arrangement of health related awareness training; submits information and articles for the Meath Travellers Workshop newsletters; attends and represents at meetings and events e.g. Social Inclusion Week and National Traveller Health Network. 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.

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.

For more details and findings from the All Ireland Traveller Health Study please go to the Resources page on www.travellernews.ie



Members of Meath Primary Health Care Project for Travellers pictured with some of their guests as they celebrated the projects' 10th Anniversary on 2nd October 2013.

many new groups: the Gardai, GAA, Macra na Feirme, Rathfeigh Historical Society and Meath County Council.

The event generated huge publicity. Overseas we had articles in The Boston Globe and on www.irishtv.com and in Ireland we had articles in the Irish Examiner, the Herald, the Star, the Mirror and on TV3 and Today FM. We also had a huge amount of support from the Meath Chronicle and LMF.

There was a huge amount of work involved and a solid year's work put into it. A testament to this was the festival being chosen as a Signature Gathering Event and winning "Best Gathering Event" at the Meath Business and Tourism awards. There is huge potential going forward with this festival.

Health

Very important work continues still with Meath Primary Health Care in order to keep the Travellers up to date on medical issues primarily diabetes and blood pressure monitoring and educating people already suffering and those who are prone to these conditions to keep an eye on their health.

Community Development Health Worker

During 2013, 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 which celebrated its 10th Anniversary this year in 2013. Louise also supports her colleagues in Meath Travellers Workshops in the development of health related learning opportunities and other initiatives for the Traveller community.

Some of these initiatives included Operation Transformation Group, supporting the Involve Youth Summer Project with nutrition information. There was a joint working initiative with Meath Travellers Workshops and Meath Community Drug and Alcohol Forum (MCDAR) organising information sessions on "Drug Awareness for parents and young adults".

Mental Health information training was offered to all CE participants. Links with Jigsaw were also made to arrange information sessions on "Supporting Young People's Wellbeing and Health" for parents in the community.

Employment and Training

Community Employment Programme

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

During 2013 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 2013 participants gained certification in subjects such as Childcare, Business Admin and Reception Skills, Security, Manual handling and safety training and Payroll training.

Progression

In 2013 we had a progression rate of 25% 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 2013 we facilitated placements from the following institutions: Navan



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

had over 62,000 individual visits last year

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 are due to be added in 2014 as part of a major re-design of our online presence.

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.



Youthreach Foundation, 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 60 clients and managed to get 23 clients into Employment/Temp Contracts/ Internships or CE positions in County Meath.

Clients also completed various training course like Manual handling, Door and Static Security, Safe Pass and First Aid.

Some clients went back to Further Education attending various courses thru the VEC in Navan like Literacy and Numeracy, Computing, Mathematics; therefore the clients are improving their skills and making themselves more jobs ready.

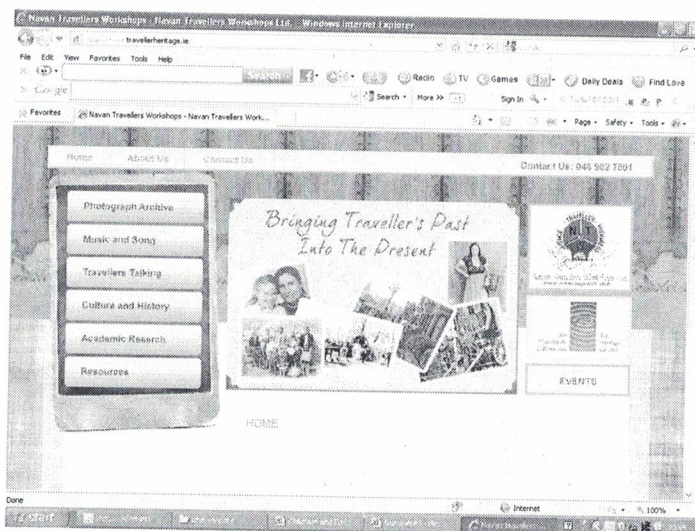


The MTEI Service helps Travellers who are looking to get into employment holding one to one meetings, identifying their skills and interests and matching them to suitable job roles. We also offer advice on appropriate training and Education opportunities. We support the individual with pre-employment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

We have various outreach facilities within County Meath and hoping to open a new one in Trim within the coming Months.

We are also able to 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



The Living History project is becoming extremely popular at the Traditional Heritage Fairs in Meath and its surrounding counties. We now find ourselves been requested from different organizations and schools which are very much welcomed by Meath Traveller Workshops Ltd. The individual parts of our exhibition are made in house by our Heritage CE team. In 2012 we added a flat and in 2013 we added a four wheeler to the exhibit. The four wheeler was a big undertaking and of huge importance to the Living History Project. As was made by our own CE heritage staff and we are very proud of this new addition.

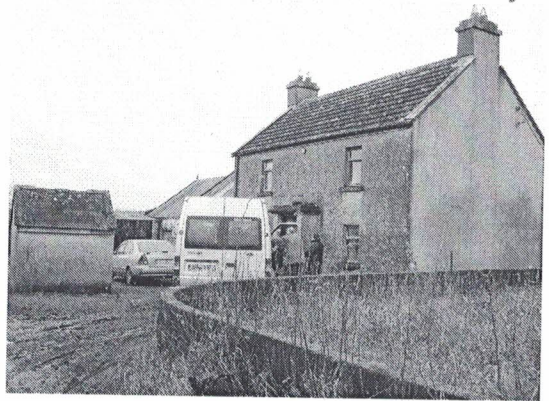
During 2013 our Living History project visited over 25 events, including the following fairs & schools: Meath Beo Temple Bar, St Michael's Loreto Convent Navan, Nobber Fair, Rathcairn, Trim Haymaking, Scoil Naoimh Eoin, Carnaross, Northside Shopping Centre, Darndale Shopping Centre, Ballyjamesduff, Dunleer, Riverstown Cooley, Mullagh Fair, Navan Educate Together, Kilskyre NS, Dangan NS Trim, Daoine Oga, Navan.

Traveller Heritage Park, Carnaross, Kells, Co Meath

Meath Travellers Workshops own nearly 70 acres of land in Carnaross, Kells. In order to utilise the space effectively, 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. 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.

Taking our lead from the recommendations of the feasibility report, work has begun clearing the site and preparing it for our future plans, including continuing to renovate and repair the farmhouse on the site. 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
- 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

Horsemanship, stabling and pasture facilities will be the first activity up and running in Carnaross. This is scheduled to happen in 2014. 2014 will also be spent sourcing funding to allow our plans to further develop.

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, 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, 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, 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,*

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

Management and Staff of Meath Travellers Workshops Ltd 2013

Board of Directors	Staff
Joe Reilly – Chairperson John McDonagh Jenny D’Arcy Julie Power Kathleen Connors Marie Daly Kathleen McDonagh Ellen McDonagh (Company Secretary) Paddy Pryle (Treasurer)	Manager - Michael McDonagh Secretary - Anne Hyland Finance Officer – Tracy Donohue Little Angels Childcare co-ordinator - Marie McDonagh Youth Work Co-ordinator – Kay McCabe Youth Worker – Micheal Mac Donnachada Community Development and Heritage Worker – Ellen McDonagh Community Development Health Worker – Louise Levins Community and Development and Outreach Worker – Sinead Burke Community Employment Supervisor – Peter Martin MTEI Facilitator – Leisa Colligan
Additional members for the Board of Management Leonard Callaghan Nathanya McDonagh	There are also 19 Community Employment Participants working in MTW Ltd.

