



No communities in Ireland have been as consistently tarred and feathered as the Travellers and the Roma. If a lie is repeated often enough it becomes the “truth”.

One of the true triumphs of Traveller and Romani life in Ireland in recent years is the culture’s ability to be tremendously resilient in the face of naked racism.

Critical to the ongoing success of Pavee Point is the fact that for 30 years the organization has had the ability to look from both within and without, clearly identifying the issues confronting not only Irish Travellers but amongst wider Irish society too, from the top of the political echelon to the smaller, more anonymous corners. Here are the the facts: the Travellers and the Roma are ethnic minorities. They are, and have been, subject to intense racism in Ireland. For us to move forward – as a thinking, vibrant democracy – we must acknowledge those two essential pillars and open the gateposts from there.

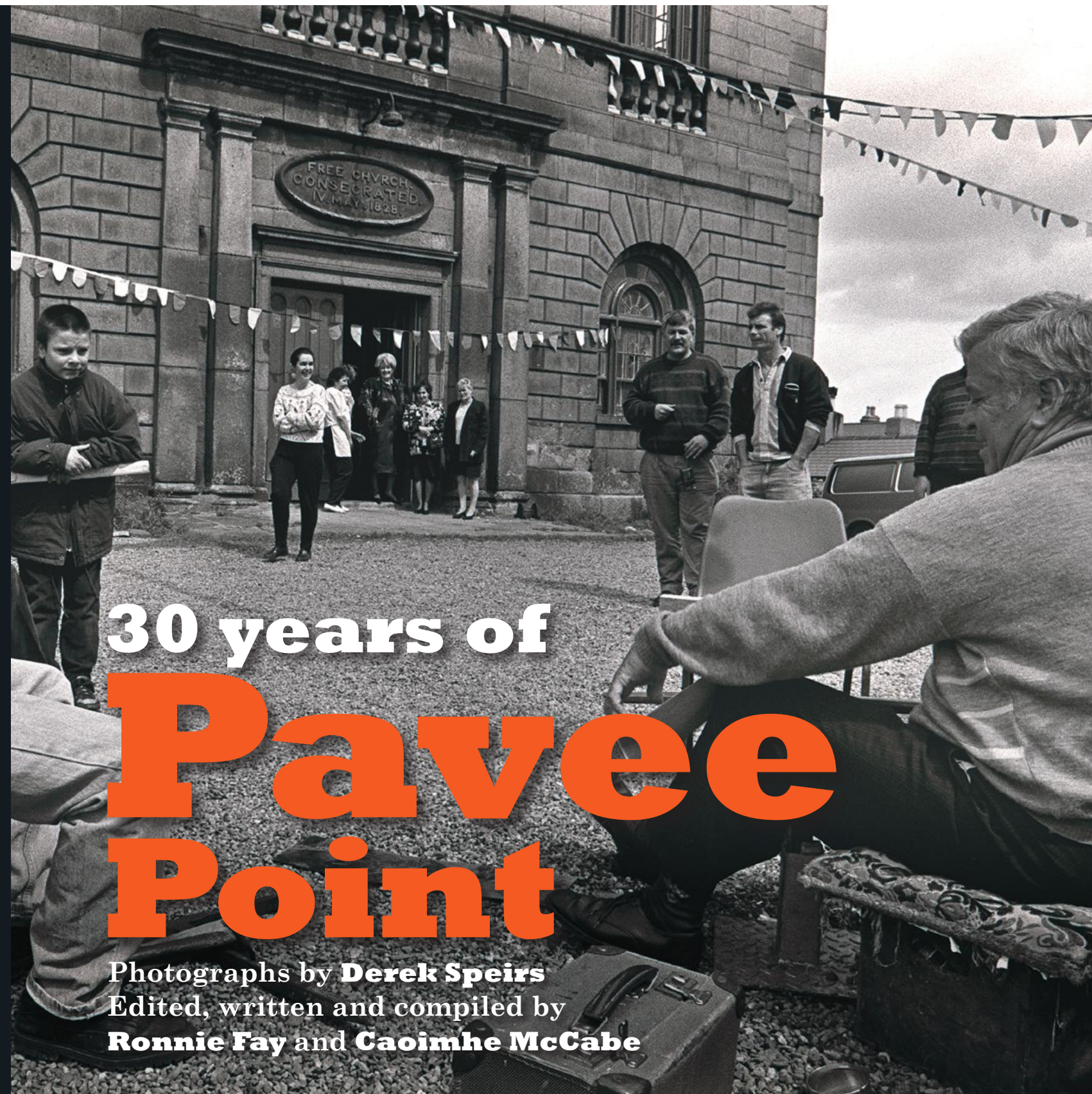
**Colum McCann**

€20.00



Pavee Point Publications

30 years of **Pavee Point**



# 30 years of **Pavee Point**

Photographs by **Derek Speirs**

Edited, written and compiled by

**Ronnie Fay and Caoimhe McCabe**







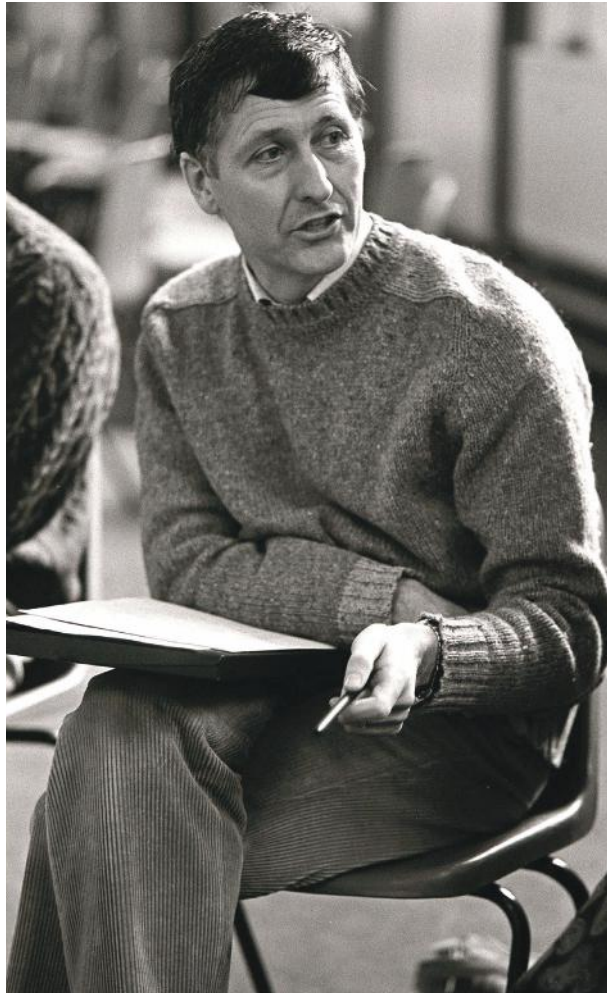
# 30 years of **Pavee Point**

Photographs by **Derek Speirs**

Edited, written and compiled by  
**Ronnie Fay** and **Caoimhe McCabe**







John O'Connell 1949-1999

*“Open up our minds, and more importantly our imaginations, take another look at the notion of nomadism in the lives of Travellers, and see it not as an aberration, but as a fulfilling and humane form of existence”*

**John O'Connell, ‘Pavee Pictures’ 1991**

*This book is dedicated to the memory of **John O'Connell**, our inspiration, founding member and first director of Pavee Point 1985-1999, and to all the Travellers, Roma and supporters who have shared our journey through the years.*

*We fondly remember those with whom we travelled and who are no longer with us, among whom are: Nellie Joyce, Kathleen McDonnell, Colly Power, Chrissie Joyce, Annie Maughan, Julia Collins, Sheila Keenan, Mary Lawrence and Martin (Keenan) Collins.*

*We acknowledge and thank all the staff, Board and Trust members, funders and the many others who have stood in solidarity with us through the years.*

*This publication has been made possible through the legacy of the late Margaret Gleeson, formerly of RTE, who was a supporter of our work in struggling for Travellers’ human rights.*



# Preface

It is hard to believe that it is over 31 years since I started working with Travellers and Roma. From early days, Travellers opened their homes and hearts to me and always made me feel most welcome. The trailers and housing they live in may have changed through the years; the Traveller’s ‘kettle of tea’ is something you rarely see now and the hairstyles and dress style may be different, but the nature of that initial warm welcome remains the same.

It has been my privilege to get to know Travellers the length and breathe of Ireland. My relationship with Travellers has shaped my adult life. My work with Travellers has afforded me opportunities that I would otherwise never have had. I hope in return, that working with many others, I have in some way contributed to the positive developments in recent years, in particular the emergence of the voice of Travellers themselves in a way that would been rare in the mid 1980’s and before the emergence of Pavee Point and other Traveller groups.

The tragedy in Carrickmines in October 2015 which resulted in the death of 10 Travellers, adults and children who died in a horrific fire on a temporary halting site that existed for 8 years, has provided a brief insight into the conditions that continue to be experienced by many Travellers in Ireland today. The tragedy demonstrates how far we still have to go to ensure Travellers are treated as equal citizens.

From the early days in the mid 1980’s despite the levels of poverty, it was the pride in their identity, their families, their faith, their community strength and their resilience in face of adversity that impressed me and continues to impress me to this day. If there is a consistent theme that emerges from this book it is the determination of a small minority to struggle against the huge inequalities they have faced in-

cluding racism, poverty and official neglect. And despite the official neglect and discrimination the hope that can still come from the support from some individuals who may be civil servants, teachers, politicians, journalists, health workers, employers, or Garda but who share an anger and compassion for the conditions faced by Travellers in 21st century Ireland.

Shortly after I first started to work with Travellers I remember being appalled when a Traveller woman told me that in her children’s school there was a white line drawn across the playground and the Traveller children had to play on one side of the line, while all the ‘country’ (settled) children played on the other side. That her children were given a shower every morning when they went into school and frequently returned home in different clothes from what they had worn into school. She was angry and frustrated about both the attitudes in the school and the dreadful conditions in her halting site and wanted something done about it.

It was not just the actions that made me angry but it was the mind-set behind the actions; the lack of any interaction by the principal with the Traveller families whose children attended the school; the casual acceptance by teachers of the segregation of children from a young age; the thoughtlessness on the long term impact of these policies on all children in the school. Worst of all, I was to learn, it was not an aberration, but was undertaken with the sanction of the Department of Education at the time.

Ironically this was at a period in the 1980’s when Ireland was held up as a beacon for the world in the fight against racism and apartheid in South Africa following the brave stance of the Dunne’s Stores Strikers. The reason why such practices in Irish schools have (mostly) found

Published 2015  
Copyright © text Pavee Point  
Copyright © photographs Derek Speirs

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre,  
46 North Great Charles Street,  
Dublin 1  
email: info@pavee.ie  
www.paveepoint.ie

Design and layout Pat Pidgeon

Printed by Nicholson & Bass Ltd,

ISBN 1 897598 33 5

Citation: Fay, R. and McCabe, C. (2015)  
30 Years of Pavee Point.  
Published by Pavee Point.

Photo on cover: National Traveller Art  
Festival Pavee Point May 1992  
Photo on back: Brigid Collins entering Pavee  
Point, November 1993





May 1988, Avila Park Finglas Ronnie Fay chats to young Geraldine Collins along with Nell Collins Mary McCann, Sheila Reilly and Biddy McDonagh

their way into the dust-bin of history is because of the combined voice of Travellers with the support of bodies such as Pavee Point.

There have been huge, often enforced changes in the Traveller way of life since the 1980's. The impact of these changes, featured in this book have been both negative and positive. The most striking development for me is the emergence of so many Irish Travellers, both men and women, as strong and effective advocates for their own community. It is also remarkable what can be done when the will is there. We do have examples of beautifully designed halting sites and group housing schemes; of positive and intercultural approach to education in some schools and wonderful primary health care projects where it is the older Traveller women that often take the lead.

I have also witnessed changes over the last few decades that have been less positive. The continued high levels of unemployment and poverty and continued shunning of Travellers that has prised open fault lines within the Traveller community and has contributed to unacceptable anti-social behaviour. These remain significant issues that demand the support of the State which continues to gloss over and ignore the causes of these fault-lines.

I am very proud of the contribution we made to the development of the local and national Traveller infrastructure throughout the country and to Traveller policy development. I am disappointed that Traveller ethnicity has still not been formally recognised by the State or that many of the policies we contributed so hard to developing have not been implemented. That is why we continue to lobby for the establishment of an independent statutory Traveller agency to drive the implementation of policy in the areas of health, education, accommodation, economic development and culture.

In Pavee Point we have occupied a difficult space throughout the years. As well as challenging State inaction on Travellers and Roma,

we have also challenged these communities to address sensitive issues such as drug misuse, conflict, consanguinity, violence against women, child protection, sexuality and the concerns of LGBTQ Travellers and Roma.

We have developed and published a range of resources, factsheets, policy papers and research reports throughout the years. We have provided information to thousands of students, journalists, policy makers and the general public. We have worked with the media and provided speakers to give a Traveller perspective on whatever the current crisis is.

Turning around a situation where Travellers could be talked about freely and negatively on the media without ever being challenged to a situation where stereotyping would at least be challenged and where balance was sought because there was now an organisation who could provide articulate speakers with a different perspective.

I have been proud to work with my colleague and friend Martin Collins as Co-Director of Pavee Point and before Martin with John O'Connell, the first Director of Pavee Point who contributed greatly to my own personal development and for whom I continue to have immense respect and who died so much before his time. To the great guidance, insight and support from Anastasia Crickley as Chairperson of Pavee Point who brought a 'political' as well as academic rigour to our work; to my family and all who I have worked with.

I am touched and thankful for the support, prayers and encouragement I receive from Travellers and Roma throughout Ireland in my battles with cancer. They pray for and with me; bring me to Holy Priests and curing places. They send me mass bouquets and Holy water from all over the world. They encourage me to keep fighting my illness and to show the strength and courage they have in abundance in face of adversity.

**Ronnie Fay**



# Contents

Foreword	12
Introduction	14
Beginnings	26
Community Development	34
Education	42
Health	50
Economic Activity	60
Roma	68
Accommodation	78
Gender	88
Drugs and Emerging Issues	96
Youth and Children	106
Cultural Action	114
Discrimination	124
Mediation	132
Lobbying	140
Traveller Infrastructure	150
Solidarity and Partnership	158
Pavee Point Publications	168



April 1980, Collins family in their Tigeen, Avila Park, Finglas, Dublin



# Foreword

*“Let us not look back to the past with anger, nor towards the future with fear, but look around with awareness.”*

**James Thurber**

I was at a literary reading a few years ago when a man stood up and asked me why I had bothered to write a book about the “gypsies.” He spoke with the thin accent of a man who would only put a pejorative lowercase “g” on the word. I asked why shouldn’t a novelist write a book about the Roma or the Travellers? He proceeded to whip a list of adjectives out from the tight collar of his throat, and he applied them forcefully: secretive, immoral, dishonest, uncouth, nomadic, rapacious and predatory. I asked him if he would prefer that I wrote a book about the good folks at Anglo Irish Bank. Irony wasn’t his strong suit. He huffed and walked away. I thought to myself that he moved like an advertisement for Nama: appropriating all the space around him, ready to sell it to an outsider.

No communities in Ireland have been as consistently tarred and feathered as the Travellers and the Roma. If a lie is repeated often enough it becomes the “truth”. The man at the literary reading had created his own truth and he was sticking to it. He, like so many of us, had bought into the simplicity and ease of cliché. The tarring brush is so easily applied.

One of the true triumphs of Traveller and Romani life in Ireland in recent years is the culture’s ability to be tremendously resilient in the face of naked racism.

At the same time, the filter of sentimentality is often invoked and the exoticisation of the Roma and the Travellers is not something that can, or should, be taken easily. I had spent the best part of three years working on the novel and had come to understand that the culture

that was as internally diverse as any other. The crux of the matter when talking about any culture is that we must recognise that the essence of intelligence is the ability to hold two or more opposing ideas at the exact same time.

Critical to the ongoing success of Pavee Point is the fact that for 30 years the organization has had the ability to look from both within and without, clearly identifying the issues confronting not only Irish Travellers but amongst wider Irish society too, from the top of the political echelon to the smaller, more anonymous corners. Here are the the facts: the Travellers and the Roma are ethnic minorities. They are, and have been, subject to intense racism in Ireland. For us to move forward – as a thinking, vibrant democracy – we must acknowledge those two essential pillars and open the gateposts from there.

Clearly the ability of Irish Travellers and the Roma to tell their stories is paramount to dignity and survival. Equally it is profoundly important that the story be heard – otherwise the whole landscape will continue to be gate-locked. A story without a listener is hardly a story at all. The stories must go back and forth: from Traveller to mainstream and back again. Within this context, story-telling is the precise crux of the matter – the Travellers and the Roma have a right to absolute self-determination, and they have to be involved in all decisions that affect the past, the present and the consequent future.

To be heard and to listen: this is a matter of proper empowerment. To catch contradiction and to destroy cliché is part of this transaction. Traveller life can be mundane. The Romani blood laws are not necessarily obeyed. The Traveller playwright can carve out the heart of non-Traveller society. The inside of a Romani house does not always sparkle. A Traveller fid-



April 1993, Biddy and Twin Collins, Avila Park, Finglas, Dublin

dle does not necessarily tune itself. The Romani psychologist does not have to hide her skin. The Traveller doctor is not just a seventh son. That person begging on the corner has more resemblance to a banker than anything else. Let’s not forget that those who own the land do not necessarily love it. Life, as Pasternak has said, is not so easy as to cross a field.

Young Traveller activists are today making a mark. They are less and less afraid to stand up and say where they come from. They are instituting a new form of cultural memory.

At the core of all this – and what Pavee Point has strived to achieve for decades – is that all of us have to continue to make a more nuanced argument about ourselves and our relationship to one another. What we must do is learn to not just restore ourselves, but we must “re-story” ourselves too. There are so many contradictory perceptions of Travellers in Ireland that unless

we learn the twin values of telling and listening it is likely that we will remain mired in the very deep ditch of simplicity. This book picks up that dialogue.

A smidgin of understanding is worth a ton of judgements. Thirty years ago it began. Pavee Point looks to the past as a key to the future: long may it happen. In fact, long may it continue to begin.

**Colum McCann**

*Colum McCann’s 2006 novel **Zoli** follows the life of Marienka Novotna, nicknamed “Zoli”, a Slovak Romani woman, from her childhood in the 1930s. Zoli is loosely based on the life of the Polish Romani poet Papusza. Zoli explores the persecution the Roma faced during World War II, as well as the impact of totalitarianism on Romani culture and lifestyles.*



# Introduction

For the past thirty years Derek Speirs photographs have provided a vibrant visual record of Pavee Point's journey through the programmes, projects, protests, pilgrimages and other processes in support of Travellers rights outlined in the text by Ronnie Fay and Caoimhe McCabe that accompanies them here. That journey commenced with the start of the first Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group (DTEDG later Pavee Point) programme in Meath Street Parish Centre on a snowy January morning in 1985.

From the outset the committment was to Travellers rights as a minority ethnic group in Irish society with discrimination and racism as key obstacles to be addressed at all levels. Traveller women's rights were acknowledged and discussed. Community development, through which people become conscious of their own power and identity and work collectively towards their own rights and interests, was the key method used. Messages which challenged dominant perceptions of Travellers were consistently repeated in the programme, on the media, to the State, and to any other groups who cared to listen.

John O'Connell's courage, vision and capacity to empower people, successfully changed that innovative ANCO (later FAS now Solas) funded programme into the start of a new organisation which heralded a new era nationally in work with Travellers. He inspired many, advanced much, and created conditions for others to achieve more up to his untimely death in 1999.

Ronnie Fay, who as a founder member had shaped Pavee Point with John from the beginning replaced him as director. Ronnie's commitment and determination in good times and bad, and in spite of her own health problems, has ensured Pavee Point's continuation and

contribution to Travellers rights over thirty years. She has turned a great idea into a sustainable organisation and worked unstintingly also to ensure that consistent and critical voices for Travellers rights remain resourced nationally

Martin Collins, a leader respected by all sectors, was also involved from the beginning, has for a number of years now shared the leadership of Pavee Point with Ronnie. Martin's unique capacity for incisive analysis and for courageously taking stands on the issues reinforcing Travellers oppression have been crucial for progressing Traveller rights. His work has been crucial also for Pavee Point.

Martin and Ronnie have ensured Pavee Point's contribution both at home and abroad and ensured also our solidarity with other causes but they and John are not the only people in Pavee Point's thirty year story. Many others often unsung have made the journey possible. Some are still with us and some gone to their rewards, may they rest in peace. Others have contributed as staff, supporters and funders for which we are very grateful. Many feature in the photographs that follow which I commend to you.

The photographs and accompanying narrative portray clearly the dreadful conditions and inequalities faced by Travellers and the many aspects of the work of Pavee Point in response to these. They provide evidence of the way each identified need was addressed, of how Traveller women's issues were included from the start, and of ongoing solidarity with others.

A picture of ambition and determination emerges which gained respect from many and was able to win support (sometimes) from policy makers. But the photographs also show that real people were involved and that time out was



April 1993, Jim Donovan, Avila Park, plays his tin whistle

possible with fun and friendship too

Finally perhaps not as we thought would be the case thirty years ago, this is still work in progress as the tragic fire in Carrickmines and some local reactions reminded us. There is still discrimination and racism to be addressed and still Travellers rights to be realised....but some progress has been made and a better future is

possible and hopefully in another 30 years there will be photos to illustrate this.

I'm proud to have had a small part in Pavee Point's journey along the road less travelled and privileged to know, and to have known, those who are and have been part of it.

**Anastasia Crickley**  
Chairperson





December 1984, Kathleen McCarthy and her Grandmother Mattie Joyce, Coolock



September 2009, Dublin, Nell Collins and Mary McCann protesting against cuts to CDP Programme





December 1989, Tallaght Dublin



April 1994, Chrissie and Paddy Ward and family, Coolock



April 1994, Traveller Pre-School Cara Park, Coolock



December 1989, Clondalkin, Dublin



April 1993, Dublin, collecting scrap



# Setting the Scene

In the late 1970s Derek Speirs began photographing Travellers and the circumstances in which they lived in the course of his work with magazines including Hibernia and Magill. In the mid to late 1980s he began working with Pavee Point which was then the Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group (DTEDG). The first big collaboration with Travellers in DTEDG, involved the production of photographs for an exhibition ‘Pavee Pictures’, designed by Pat Pidgeon. Speirs and Pidgeon continued to work with Pavee Point over the years. This is the latest collaboration with Pavee Point.

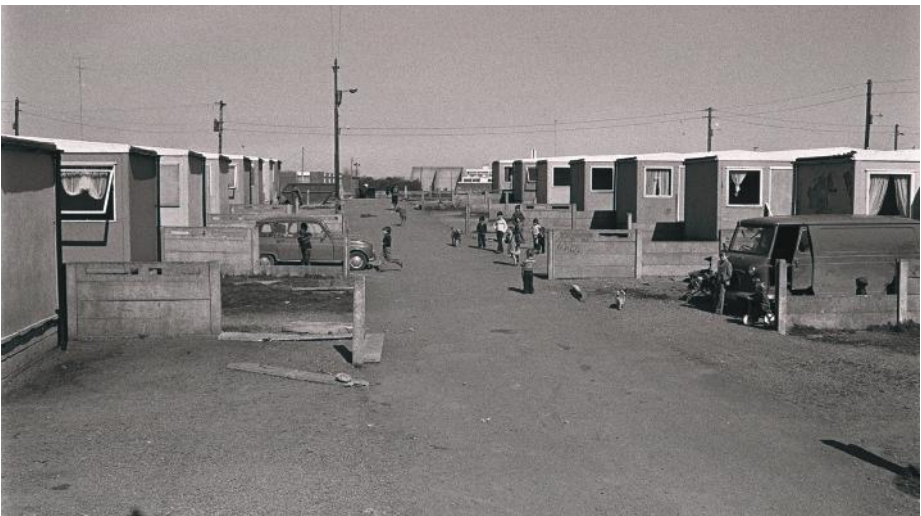
A series of themes have been used to document aspects of the work of Pavee Point over the last 30 years and explain the context of the photographs displayed in this publication. The text gives an overview of the theme and does not in any way represent a comprehensive account of our work under any specific theme. It gives a mere taster and further detailed information on specific themes is available through our website [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie).



April 1980, Donovan family, Scribblestown Lane, Finglas, Dublin



April 1980, Griffith Avenue extension



April 1980, Avila Park Tigeens



April 1980, Griffith Avenue extension



April 1980, Scribblestown Lane



April 1980, Avila Park, Finglas



April 1980, Avila Park, Finglas



April 1980, Collins children Avila Park





April 1980, Joe McDonnell and Laurence Cawley, Finglas,



April 1980, Joe and Nan McDonnell and family, Finglas



April 1980, Donovan camp, Scribblestown, Lane Finglas, Dublin



November 1994, Cappagh, Dublin



December 1984, Cardiffsbridge, Finglas



December 1984, Belcamp, Dublin



December 1984, Belcamp, Dublin



April 1989, Mickey Collins, Dunsink Dump



April 1980, Griffith Avenue extension, Dublin



April 1980, Griffith Avenue extension, Dublin





9 March 1984, Fr Michael McCullough, Mervyn Ennis, Sr Helena Brennan, Sr Mary McManus, Sr Brenda O'Neill and Fr Michael Mernagh Firhouse eviction Tallaght



March 1984, Sr Helena Brennan Firhouse eviction



March 1984, Firhouse eviction



July 1982, Nan Joyce Dublin



July 1985, Tom and Mary McCann drive their barrel-top in a Minceir Misli protest, Dublin



30 June 1984, Tallaght By-pass protest



30 June 1984, Tallaght By-pass counter protest, Ronnie Fay third left



June 1984, Tallaght By-pass



# Beginnings

**In the 1960s and 1970s Irish Travellers were living in dire circumstances – atrocious living conditions, poverty, exclusion and ill-health. The State solution to this ‘problem’ was that Travellers should be ‘absorbed’ into the settled community. It was expected that Travellers give up their nomadic way of life and become like the general population.**

In the early 1980s, these ‘assimilationist’ attitudes towards Travellers translated into violent evictions of Travellers from land designated to build the Tallaght By-Pass in Dublin. Travellers were under threat of being burned out.

It was in this turbulent context that a group of Travellers and settled people began meeting in Dublin in 1983. Mervyn Ennis, a community worker with the Health Board, was associated with these initiatives and convened the first meeting of the group.

Over two years, the philosophy and approach of this group was debated and discussed by the community workers and returned missionaries who made up this group. These included Anastasia Crickley, John O’Connell, Mairín Kenny Sisters Helena Brennan, Mary Taylor, Mary McManus and Ronnie Fay.

This group made contact with Travellers and consultations were organised with individuals and with existing Traveller organisations at the time – the Dublin Council for the Travelling



March 1987, landmark DTEDG Community Development conference

‘Travellers Getting Involved’ at Dowdstown House, Navan



People and the National Council for the Travelling People and Mincéir Misli.

Funding was secured from ANCO (later FÁS) and, in January 1985, the first Traveller Development Programme was rolled out. The Dublin Travellers' Education and Development Group – later to be known as Pavee Point - was established. When we felt ready to go ahead, the Meath Street Parish loaned the group two rooms.

Critical to the sustainability and success of Pavee Point was the fact that, from the beginning, this group clearly identified the issues confronting Travellers and wider Irish society.

‘From our inception Pavee Point had two key premises, which are as relevant today as they were 30 years ago,’ explains Pavee Point Director and founding member Ronnie Fay. ‘Firstly, we recognised Travellers as a minority ethnic group and racism as the root cause of many of the problems Travellers were facing in Irish society. Secondly, we recognised Travellers’ right to self-determination and believed that Travellers themselves had to be involved in all decisions affecting their lives.’

This analysis changed the face of Traveller issues in Ireland forever. A process of Traveller empowerment had begun and Pavee Point had the tools and know how to bring these changes to bear.

Our first Director, John O’Connell, brought with him considerable experience of social analysis and action from his work with marginalised groups in the Philippines. Community worker involvement, both at staff and management levels, ensured that the organisation was grounded in a community development approach.

Forty-eight Travellers presented themselves to fill the 12 places on the first Traveller Development Programme in the Little Flower Centre in Meath Street. Places were provided for 24 people. Martin Collins, Co-Director of Pavee Point was one of the 24 people on that first programme.

The story is often told in Pavee Point of how John O’Connell asked the group the meaning of the word ‘discrimination’ and nobody knew. Then he asked the group if they had ever been



March 1987, ‘Travellers Getting Involved’ conference Navan



January 1996, John O’Connell welcomes President Mary Robinson to Pavee Point

followed around in a shop by the owner under suspicion of stealing. Twenty-four people put up their hands.

By giving Travellers the words to describe their experiences Irish Travellers were, in fact, given a voice. ‘Through this language Travellers were given the tools to be able to demand our entitlements and rights,’ explains Martin Collins.

Travellers who completed our first Traveller



April 1990, handover of ‘Free Church’ to Pavee Point



January 1996, Cultural Action Seminar, Pavee Point



October 1995, 10th anniversary celebration DTEDG to Pavee Point





April 1989, Oranmore, Galway



March 1991, Taoiseach Charles Haughey at official opening of Pavee Point

Development Programme and other initiatives in the late 1980s went on to occupy leadership positions in their own community and in national Traveller initiatives including Catherine Joyce, ITM and Blanchardstown; Martin Collins, Pavee Point; Chrissie O'Sullivan, Cork Traveller Visibility Group; Michael Collins, Actor; Nancy Power, National Traveller MABS and Thomas McCann, National Traveller Counselling Service.

There is no doubt about the importance of the charismatic leadership, intellectual and communication capacities of John O'Connell, our first Director. He was a courageous and contagious force for change until his untimely death in 1999.

In accordance with a participative approach Pavee Point looked for places within the existing policy structures dealing with Travellers and joined the National Council for the Travelling People. Within this structure we put forward our challenging ideas.

'The meetings were very argumentative', remembers Martin Collins. He also recounts how difficult it was for some members of the settled community to take on ideas of Traveller identity and culture.

Differences within the Council came to a head in November 1990 at the AGM. 'We wanted this structure to change,' explains Martin, 'We never wanted it disbanded.'

However, at that AGM the Executive Committee of the Council itself put forward a motion to disband. We focused on change and Traveller rights and voted against dissolution. But the motion was carried.

Hours later, Pavee Point members and others gathered to set up an alternative national structure. Much of the groundwork for this structure had already taken place as solidarity had been built with other professionals from throughout the country – teachers, social workers and religious – who were working with Travellers at the time.

Pavee Point, being a partnership organisation and Dublin-based at the time, saw the need for a national representative organisation for Travellers. At a gathering at the Greville Arms Hotel, Mullingar that same evening it established the Irish Traveller Movement as a national network organisation with membership throughout the country.

Throughout its existence Pavee Point has continued in the same spirit that it began. It continues to challenge dominant ideas - both within the Traveller community and in wider society – in order to bring about a more just society for Travellers.

It looks for innovative ways to involve Travellers in decision-making and in providing services and support to Travellers.

'Meeting Ronnie Fay and John O'Connell was like winning the Lotto for Travellers'- Molly Collins.



December 1990, President Mary Robinson at Pavee Point



February 1994, Dublin



February 1994, Dublin



October 1996, Dublin



September 1989, US politician and lawyer Paul O'Dwyer at DTEDG Upper Gardiner Street



October 1997, Minister Mary Wallace at Pavee Point



September 1989, Dublin



September 1992, Staff at Pavee Point





**Pavee Pictures**



Photos By Derek Spill

April 1989, Sheila Reilly and Mary McDonagh waiting for the bus at Salthill, following a visit by Pavee Point Women's Group to Fairgreen Co-op, Galway. This photograph was used on the cover of the book Pavee Pictures and featured in the exhibition of the same name in 1991.



# Community Development

**Prior to Pavee Point there had been little success in developing a collective Traveller approach to Traveller issues. Issues were dealt with in a more ad-hoc, non-strategic, individual level.**

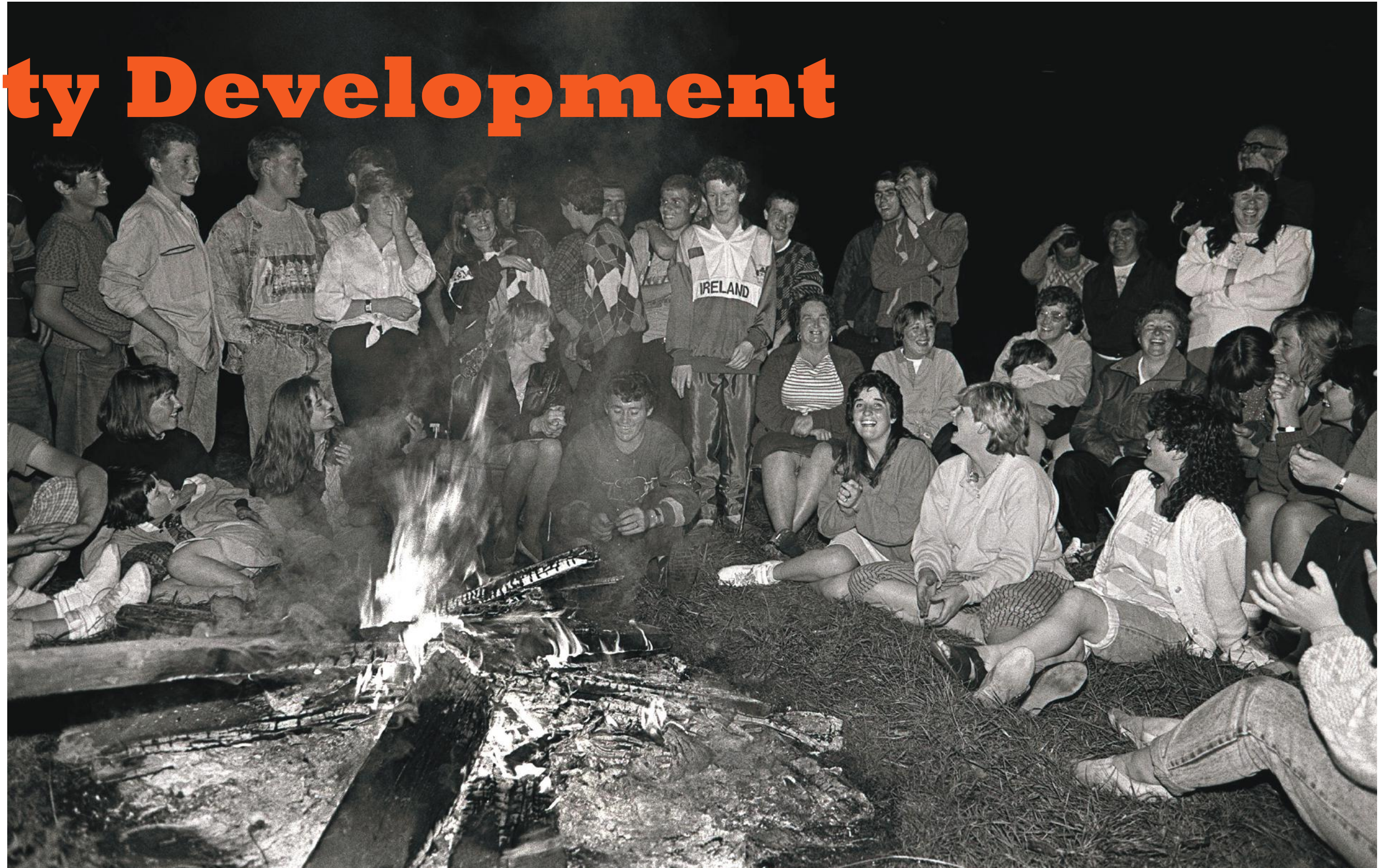
The people involved in Pavee Point particularly our Chairperson, Anastasia Crickley, an experienced Community Development Worker, could see its advantages in providing an approach to Traveller issues. Community Development consisted of a clear set of principles - empowerment and self-determination, participation, collective action, social justice and equality.

Moreover, Community Development provided a way of working that embodied these principles. Community members come together, often supported by a community worker, to discuss their concerns, assess options and arrive at their own conclusions and to make a collective decision in the interests of their community.

This approach has been tried and tested in many areas around the world. As a result it is an approach that is recognised internationally by the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, the OECD and the European Union.

Pavee Point, then as now, developed its own Community Development projects to respond to Travellers' needs. These projects promote Traveller leadership and use innovative ways to enable Travellers to express Traveller issues and to deal with these issues.

An early example of this was an initiative which led to the first Pilgrimage in Solidarity



July 1990, bonfire at Traveller Pilgrimage, Carrick-on-Shannon



with Travellers. This consisted of a traditional nine day walk from Dublin to Maam in Connemara. These pilgrimages provided a creative space for celebration of identity and collective discussion of issues as well as for prayer and religious ceremonies.

In its early Development Programmes the process consisted of lectures, large and small group discussions and experiential learning. In the book 'Travellers Getting Involved' it explains: "Sessions dealing with behaviour in the group, the exercise of responsibility and authority, decision making, running meetings, overcoming dependency were also run in an experiential manner."

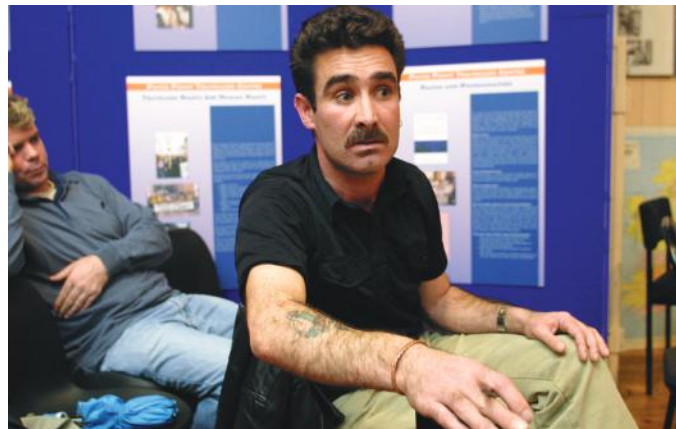
Central to the process was the emphasis on learning through doing, achieved by undertaking concrete tasks, followed by group reflection and sharing. A safe environment was needed where confidentiality was maintained and every participant's opinion was respected.

In these first Development Programmes content included: Irish society, Travellers, personal development, youth and community work, literacy, photography, graphics and drama projects, general knowledge and social exposure via field trips and visits.

Among the first actions of the group, for example, was protesting against apartheid in South Africa by supporting the Dunnes Stores workers' strike in 1985. The realisation of the universality of various Traveller issues was, and is, empowering for the Traveller community and brings the Traveller struggle into line with other struggles for human rights by minority groups around the world.

Other early Community Development Projects focused around Traveller Culture and Heritage. The emphasis was in developing a sense of pride in one's origins and identity.

Soon, Pavee Point created space for women and men to reflect separately on the gendered nature of their experiences and issues affecting them. Given the demographics of the Traveller population with over 42% under 15 years of age, it also became a particular objective of Pavee Point to promote Travellers as Community and Youth Workers, which was indeed one of the



November 2002, Martin Collins, Pavee Point



April 2013, Rosaleen McDonagh, Pavee Point



November 2002, Prof. Jane Helleiner and Ronnie Fay



January 2014 Jim O'Brien, Pavee Point



8 September 2009, Travellers protest against cuts to National Community Development Programme



2 May 2002, The Connors Brothers protest at introduction of Trespass Act, Dublin



August 1984 Dunnes Stores strike Dublin



first qualifications Travellers achieved through Pavee Point with the support of the community work department in Maynooth University.

The Traveller Economy was also identified as an important area of work if poverty issues were to be addressed and some successful projects were run in this area.

Community Development work also took the form of working with the settled population. Evening courses on Travellers and Human Rights – A Rights Approach in Work with Travellers – started in Dublin in the late 1980s and were then run throughout Ireland. This work was essential in building support for the ideas of Pavee Point and for introducing and embedding Community Development and Human Rights language in other organisations working with Travellers.

In 1987 we also produced a detailed booklet ‘Travellers Getting Involved’ as part of a conference which explained our methods and rationale and was used to gain support for our way of working.

In recognition of our work with Travellers and the settled population Pavee Point was, in 1993, designated a Specialist Support Agency to the Government’s Community Development Programme.

The approach Pavee Point undertook was to target geographical areas where the greatest number of Travellers lived. It then worked with local Community Development Projects and Local Development Companies and other relevant stakeholders to establish independent Traveller organisations where there was a significant Traveller population.

This approach has proven to be the most effective in ensuring Traveller access to a range of services and ensuring Traveller empowerment and participation. This strategy resulted in the establishment of up to 20 local Traveller Community Development Projects throughout the country.

As a community development organisation, Pavee Point works with the settled community providing training on Traveller inclusion, cultural awareness and anti-racism. It provides information on Traveller culture and on Travel-



March 1987, landmark Community Development Conference ‘Travellers Getting Involved’ at Dowdstown House, Navan

ler ethnicity via a wide range of information materials such as fact sheets, newsletters, videos and web articles.

Participation in networks is also vital and we support Travellers and settled people in ensuring that that Traveller issues are promoted in a variety of area based and interest based structures. We ourselves participate in the Community Workers Co-Operative, a national organisation that promotes and supports community work.

All this demands considerable co-ordination and significant numbers of people. Multi-tasking and flexibility is at the centre of the way

Pavee Point approaches Traveller inclusion thereby maximising its outreach capacity.

Recent Government pressures for cohesion and alignment, to achieve financial savings, put the independence of Traveller Community Development Projects at risk. Pavee Point, along with other Traveller organisations, was instrumental in setting up the National Traveller Partnership in 2011 to act as the conduit for funding for Traveller CDPs.

In this way we have been able to survive attempts to jeopardise the work of the last thirty years in giving Traveller’s a voice and empowering Travellers at a local level.



March 1987, ‘Travellers Getting Involved’ conference, Navan



May 2011, Biddy Collins

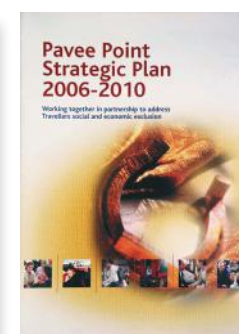


April 2013, Molly Collins



April 2013, Matt Cooper launches Travelling with Austerity, Pavee Point





January 2002, Bridgie McInerney sits in a traditional barrel-top wagon parked on the roadside near Tullamore, Co Offaly.



# Education

**“I think what Pavee Point has done from the start is to say: Travellers can and should succeed in education. That was a big change for the community. Now it’s different, young Travellers are going on in education, becoming teachers and doctors. I never thought that would happen”, Kathleen McDonnell**

In 1960, when the first Government Commission regarding Travellers was established, it stated that Travellers were almost totally absent from all levels of statutory education. This was identified as a key factor in Traveller poverty.

According to the State, as long as Travellers remained nomadic, it was not possible for Traveller children to have a full education. The Government’s 1963 Commission Report advocated special classes for Travellers and stated:

“The curriculum will: promote hygiene as a practice as well as a subject; ...[include] reading, writing and arithmetic...regular manual training...pupils...will be able to read newspapers and magazines...write letters...[Thus] promoting their absorption into the settled community... [and into] ordinary classes;...policy...can only be successful...for those who had been induced to leave the wandering life.”

By the time Pavee Point was established the Government approach had changed from one of overt ‘absorption’ to ‘integration’. But, the Traveller experience of State education largely remained one of segregation, exclusion and discrimination.



October 2013, McDonnell children returning home from school at the

halting site at Dunsink Lane, Finglas, north Dublin



In Dublin in the 1980s, for example, Travellers couldn't see why they had to be bussed in from Tallaght to the Traveller school in the city. Why couldn't Traveller children attend the local schools where they lived?

If a Traveller child joined a school why were they automatically put in a Traveller only class regardless of their skill level? Traveller only classes resulted in Travellers of varying ages and competencies being lumped together giving the impression that all Travellers were 'behind' or 'backward' and needed help. Many Travellers speak of their school experiences as the first time they were made to realise they were different – in a humiliating and negative way.

Pavee Point analysed the situation from the point of view of Travellers as a minority ethnic group. We looked at the documented experiences of other minority ethnic groups around the world and researched this in terms of the Irish situation.

Internationally, segregated provision for minority ethnic groups had been proven to be, generally, not as good as what was offered in mainstream provision. For example, the Roma community have been traditionally placed in segregated education provision leading to a lack of equal education opportunities for the community.

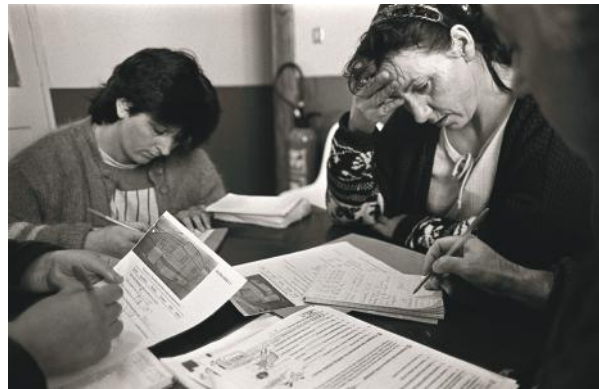
Similarly in Ireland, not only was there segregation but the level of education provided in Traveller- only environments was not on a par with mainstream education. The majority of Travellers left primary school illiterate.

At secondary level the Government response to Traveller school absenteeism was to set up, in 1974, Senior Traveller Training Centres. These Centres paid a stipend for Travellers to attend and were available to Traveller children as young as 15 years.

While Traveller Training Centres were popular with young Travellers – again we argued that the training provided was not on a par with training in the mainstream system. Expectations were lower in terms of outcomes for Travellers. In effect it meant that, over time, Travellers were being paid by the State to leave full-time education.



June 2004, Pavee Point



October 1994, Pavee Point



June 1995, Deirdre Kavanagh PHN and Ronnie Fay PHCP, Pavee Point



September 1999, Pavee Point Creche



January 2006, Roma English class, Pavee Point



October 2013, Finglas

Racism in the workplace meant it was not necessarily true for Travellers that a good education would get you a good job. This combined with a negative Traveller experience at school meant Travellers didn't always have a positive attitude towards education.

In order to address these issues, Pavee Point took a two prong approach - working with education providers to address exclusion and the Traveller community to promote inclusion.

In the early years, lobbying education providers consisted of meeting individuals in the Department of Education, writing to various players within Traveller education and inviting the relevant people to events within Pavee Point. But the Department of Education at the time didn't necessarily see that advocacy groups

had a role in relation to education.

We continued undeterred, advocating that Traveller culture should be recognised in a positive way within the school system. Teachers, we said, should receive equality and anti-racism training. We managed to persuade the Department of Education Inspectorate to commission us to provide in-service training to teachers.

Resources, we said, should be used to give Travellers who needed it support within the main classroom.

The lobbying paid off and our contribution was evident in the 1995 Traveller Task Force Report which recommended culturally appropriate Traveller education within mainstream system. In this report it was recommended that a National Traveller Education Advisory Committee (NTEAC) be established.





April 2010, Rosaleen McDonagh Graduation, Trinity College, Dublin



October 2013, McDonnell children doing homework, Dunsink, Finglas



December 1997, Education Minister Micheál Martin at launch of 'Travellers Nomads of Ireland', Pavee Point



April 2010, Traveller girls in Mater Christi school, Finglas

It took a further three years for this Committee to be established in 1998. Pavee Point, along with other Traveller organisations and Government representatives, sat on that Committee. This committee promoted a National Traveller Education Strategy which it signed off on in 2006 and which was published in 2007 by the Department of Education as *Towards a Traveller Education Strategy*.

The NTEAC was then disbanded and following much lobbying was reconstituted in 2009

as the National Traveller Education Advisory Consultative Forum. Pavee Point, along with other Traveller organisations, is represented on this Forum.

Meanwhile, Pavee Point was active in promoting education among Travellers. Since 2004 Pavee Point has run a Parents and Traveller Education Project which aims to enhance the Traveller parent experience within the school system. It produces resources to inform Traveller parents on the functioning of the

education system and also set up the Traveller Parent Representative Forum.

A variety of resources have also been produced to help teachers include Traveller culture in a positive way in their schoolwork and we work with trainee teachers in Saint Patrick's College, Dublin.

While change has been slow there have been many positive developments in Traveller Education. Traveller only classes ceased to exist in 2004 and segregated practice has, for the most part, been replaced in favour of age-appropriate integrated provision.

There are now more Traveller children attending post-primary schools and more Travellers accessing Third level education than ever before. However, numbers are still extremely low in comparison to the settled community. In 2014 only 30 Travellers were identified in Third level education.

The Department of Education now recognises the need to equip educators to educate children from minority ethnic groups. Intercultural Guidelines for Primary Schools was launched in 2005.

However, on the negative side, Traveller literacy levels and the level of attainment in education remains much lower than that of their settled peers.

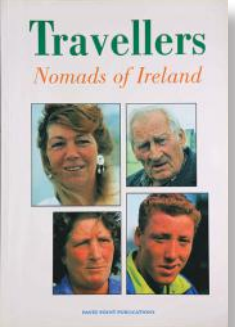
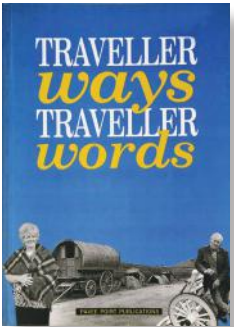
Moreover, Austerity has seen a substantial reduction in investment in Traveller education

Six hundred Resource Teachers for Travellers jobs were cut in 2011. All 33 Senior Traveller Training Centres, with about thousand students, were closed in June 2012 with no alternative put in place. Enhanced capitation funding to schools for Traveller children was substantially cut and additional school transport support ceased in 2010.

'Pavee Point is left to try and fill the gap left by these cuts', say Hilary Harmon Education Co-ordinator with Pavee Point, 'and Traveller parents, without the basic information and support, are recoiling from the education system.

Without supports more and more Traveller children are being taken out of school when faced with problems such as bullying and discrimination.'





April 1992, Ellie Carr when she was photographed for the Pavée Point book Traveller Ways, Traveller Words. Born in 1912, she recalled aspects of Traveller life from the first half of the 20th Century



# Health

**“Traveller health was put into a lot of policy thanks to Pavee Point. There was the first National Traveller Health Strategy and then the All Ireland Traveller Health Study - it wouldn't have happened only for Pavee Point,” Missie Collins, Traveller Community Health Worker.**

Traveller health has always been a major issue of concern for Pavee Point. Shocking statistics have highlighted the huge inequalities in health between Travellers and the general population.

However, it was not until the early 1990s that the possibility of engaging in targeted actions to promote improvement in Traveller health arose.

In 1992 a group of Traveller women on a programme in Pavee Point decided they wanted to tackle the health needs of Travellers. ‘People were saying that Travellers don't use health services, but nobody was asking why? But we knew it was because Travellers didn't have the information. We saw the sheer neglect there was of Travellers health and we felt something had to be done,’ Molly Collins, a Traveller Community Health Worker explains.

Primary Health Care was identified as an approach that could be piloted to facilitate Traveller participation in health. The concept of Primary Health Care was established by the World Health Organisation in the 1970s and acknowledges the need to reform conventional health systems. It's a flexible system which can be adapted to the health problems, culture, the



October 1994, Newly recruited Primary Health Care workers Mary

McDonagh, Missie, Tessa and Brigid Collins, Avila Park





May 1997, National Traveller Health Conference, All Hallows



June 1995, Baseline survey consultation, Pavee Point



April 1995, PHC training in first-aid, Pavee Point



June 1996, Missie Collins and EHB CEO Kieran Hickey at launch of 1st PHCP annual report



October 2005, Kathleen McDonnell addresses National Traveller Health Conference Croke Park



February 2000, Dental Initiative



September 1999, Traveller Primary Health Care workers

way of life and the stage of development reached by a community.

Our idea was that Travellers themselves could help bridge the health information gap and inform the development of an intercultural health service and become Community Health Workers in their own community.

Capacity building among Travellers and empowerment of Travellers were vital in the early days. This was facilitated by an in-house Pavee Point health focused course. This led to a proposal to FÁS Baldoyle in 1992 to set up a 'Health and Child-care Promotion Course for Traveller Women'.

Pavee Point made a detailed submission on Traveller health in 1993 reflected in the Government's National Health Strategy 1994 which made a commitment that a special programme would be implemented to address the particular health needs of the Traveller community.

This facilitated us in proposing a Primary Health Care Project for Travellers to the then Eastern Health Board. The project was established as a joint partnership initiative with the Eastern Health Board and Pavee Point and began as a pilot initiative in October 1994.

Missie Collins remembers: "I was the first one to approach the Health Board with Ronnie Fay. They said it's not going to work – Travellers working with Travellers. They said we can't read or write. But, I said to myself, you can't tell me that because I know our needs. We kept working away."

The first project operated in Community Care

Area No. 6 – Finglas and Cappagh. A baseline survey was carried out with great success thanks to the Traveller women's sensitivity to their own community. The research provided important information in developing strategies to target Traveller health.

An important resource for the project was a quilt which was made by the group in 1995. The quilt represented different aspects of the project and was a particularly effective information channel on the Project - especially to those with poor literacy skills.

Other resources – such as Traveller specific information leaflets and videos – were also developed to give information in a culturally appropriate way. Traveller Primary Health Care workers also worked with service providers to inform them about culturally appropriate ways to improve health within the Traveller community.

Successful lobbying by us, and a willingness to improve the situation for Travellers, resulted in support for Traveller health in the 1995 Government Task Force Report. This Report resulted in the establishment of Traveller Health Units in each health board – a major step forward.

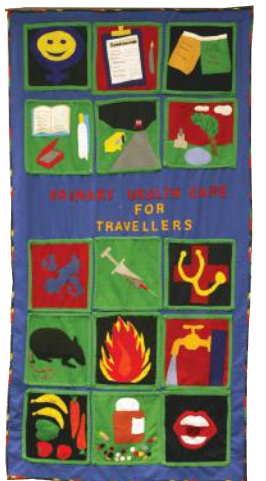
A budget for Traveller health was identified and in 1998, the National Traveller Health Advisory Committee was established to draw up a national strategy on Traveller health. We worked on this committee and after many years of input and lobbying 'Traveller Health - A National Strategy' was published in 2002.



June 2001, Launch of Traveller Health Unit Annual Report

This Strategy acknowledged, for the first time, that poor living conditions and racism and discrimination have a negative impact on Traveller health and that Travellers should help decide the best way health services can be delivered to Travellers.

Meanwhile, in 1996, we succeeded in getting our Primary Health Care Training Programme for Travellers accredited by Trinity College Dublin and the then Eastern Health Board. The model we developed was then used to replicate the project in other Traveller groups around the country. The importance of the pre-development work was recognized and funding was provided by health boards to local Traveller organisations



The original PHC quilt





May 2008, Social determinants of health game

to employ Traveller Primary Health Care workers.

In 1998 our project was awarded the World Health Organisation 50th Anniversary Commemorative Certificate. And in 2001 the project received the Guinness Living in Dublin Award for its achievements in the area of Community Development.

In the same year, Pavee Point, in conjunction with the Traveller Health Unit in the Eastern



November 2007, Traveller peer researchers preparing for All Ireland

Traveller Health Study fieldwork

Region and University College Dublin, developed training for Primary Health Care Project Co-ordinators. One Traveller Primary Health Care Worker completed the training and qualified as a co-ordinator.

By 2005, up to 30 Primary Health Care for Travellers Projects at various stages of development existed around the country showing how our partnership approach changed the face of healthcare for Travellers. A National Traveller

Health Network was established by Pavee Point to share learning from the various projects and to co-ordinate an approach in terms of lobbying and advocacy.

The development of a Traveller health network and structure helped give status to Travellers in the health arena generally. In 2010 the Royal College of Surgeons set up a bursary for Traveller students on its medical courses and continues to support Traveller inclusion in



September 2005, national meeting of Primary Health Care workers



November 2007, Preparing for AIHHS



September 1999, Health education session



July 2013, Maureen O'Sullivan TD with Nellie and Biddy Collins at launch of Mental Health Resource





October 2005, Nurul Amin and Brigid Quirke at National Travellers Conference, Croke Park



September 2002, Consanguinity seminar with Prof. Alan Bittles



November 2007, Preparing for AITHS survey



June 2012, Vincent Browne and Mary Brigid McCann at launch of summary report of AITHS

medical studies.

Traveller Community Health Workers enabled the first All-Ireland Traveller Health Study – Our Geels to be carried out in 2008-2010. Eighty study co-ordinators from Traveller projects trained at UCD and these, in turn, trained 400 Traveller peer researchers from Traveller organisations and Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects.

‘It was a huge piece of work costing €1.4 million,’ says Mary Bridget McCann, Assistant Co-Ordinator of our Primary Health Care for Travellers Project, ‘Travellers went out to do the study and collected information on about 40,000 Travellers. We had six weeks to do it and it was the middle of October 2008. It was done when Ireland was awash with money but we were visiting people with no electricity. The results of the study are shocking.’

Of the 40,000 Travellers surveyed only 8 were over 85 years of age indicating the lower life expectancy of Travellers. Positively, the areas of work focused on by Primary Health Care Projects showed results – 12% more Travellers have breast screening and 11% more smear tests than the general population.

In other areas Travellers were shown to have double the rates of back ache, asthma, bronchitis, diabetes, angina and heart attacks as in the general population.

Overall Traveller uptake of services has improved and liaison with the health services and Travellers has improved – but the further erosion of Traveller way of life has meant that Traveller men are now suffering the impact of high unemployment and exclusion. Alarming, suicide among Travellers was found to be 6.7 times the rate of the general population and accounts for 11% of all Traveller deaths.

Pavee Point and other Traveller organisations have responded by establishing Traveller Men’s Health Projects. However, it is clear that until underlying causes of ill health – poverty, poor education, social exclusion and racism, overcrowded accommodation and lack of basic services such as water and sewage services - Traveller health problems will not go away.

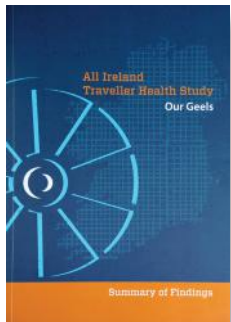


2 September 2010, Traveller peer researchers receiving their awards for undertaking the All Ireland Traveller Health Survey in UCD



2 September 2010, UCD





September 2010, Missie Collins speaking at launch of Our Geels, the All Ireland Traveller Health Study in Dublin Castle



# Economic Activity

**Up until the 1960s, Travellers were a rural people who carried out a range of economic activities based on nomadism and including recycling, tin-smithing, seasonal labour and door to door selling.**

Modernisation saw the destruction of the Traveller economic base, a move by Travellers to towns and cities and a subsequent dependency on Social Welfare.

The State attitude to Traveller unemployment has largely been to educate and train Travellers to operate within the settled economy. However, in 2011 the Census recorded that a staggering 84% unemployment still existed among the Traveller community compared to 14% unemployment in the general population. It is hard to see that Government policy has worked.

Since our foundation, Pavee Point, has instead taken a positive approach towards Traveller work and used the Travellers' strengths of flexibility, mobility and self-employment to pilot some initiatives. We were the first to pilot culturally appropriate models of economic development within the Traveller community.

We got our first Enterprise Development Worker in 1987 and in March 1989 the Travellers Resource Warehouse was set up. All types of reusable material was collected from businesses around Dublin and offered for re-use to various social and community groups. Members - for example schools, youth groups, community groups and others - could access the materials to resource their work. At one stage, over a 100



June 1991, Julia Collins, Kathleen McDonagh and Winnie Joyce at the

DTEDG Laundry Enterprise in Cara Park, Coolock, Dublin, later the Pavee Laundry





April 1995, President Mary Robinson opens the Pavee Laundry, Coolock



1992, Tinsmith James Collins, Avila Park



December 2006, Tinsmithing tools

groups were in contact with the Warehouse. In 1991 we made a presentation to the Ireland Clean and Green Conference based on the work of the Warehouse and the project also won first place in a Resource Ireland Award sponsored by An Taisce.

Another enterprise developed by Pavee Point was the Cara Park Community Services Laundry. This was set up in 1990 and four Traveller women on a Traveller Group Housing Scheme in Coolock operated the laundry to facilitate Travellers living in the vicinity. At that time most Traveller women could not drive and Travellers were often accommodated in remote areas. This meant Traveller women often had to handwash clothes but didn't always have access to water or electricity and many local launderettes discriminated against Travellers and barred them (before Equal Status Act).

The Laundry started off with three machines and in 1995 expanded and a new business plan was developed to extend the service to other Travellers and to the settled community. President Mary Robinson re-launched the laundry in 1995.

In the late 1990s we continued with our Traveller Economic and Social Inclusion Programme. Our aim was to promote and ensure the inclusion of Travellers in local and area based development initiatives. We established and worked with Traveller groups in 15 different areas and produced a range of policy papers and other resources as well as providing training and policy reports to support this work.

In 1995 we produced a piece of research – Traveller Inclusion in the Mainstream Labour Force – New Strategies for New Choices which fed into the 1995 Traveller Task Force Report.

In 1996 we published Generating Options which was a study of enterprise initiatives supported through Traveller organisations with a view to generating knowledge, resources and debate about the Traveller Economy.

We continued with our lobbying and policy work and in 2002 we published 'Job Vacancies – Vacant Jobs' – which looked at the reasons for Traveller exclusion in the then buoyant jobs market.



December 1992, Traveller Resource Warehouse, Pavee Point



March 2005, Pavee Feens Hawken training programme



March 2004 Pavee Feens Hawken conference



Interlinking reasons were identified – discrimination, lack of access to proper training and education, lack of confidence among Traveller men and critically lack of recognition for the skills Travellers possess.

To address these and other related issues Pavee Point undertook, in 2002, a major initiative under the EQUAL Community Initiative called Pavee Feens Hawken (Traveller Men Working).

This initiative which was run over three years and was undertaken at a time when there were no specific employment initiatives for Traveller men. There was even a widespread notion, then, that Traveller men did not want to ‘work’. Our EQUAL initiative exposed this assumption as unfounded as we had waiting lists for participation throughout the life of the project.

The aim of the project was to find out the best way of working with Traveller men and what the most useful supports would be. We wanted to develop a model for working with Traveller men, particularly in entrepreneurship.

The Government cited the project stating to the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2005 that Pavee Feens Hawken was mitigating against the decline of the traditional Traveller economy. The project was also recognised as a positive initiative in a report to the Traveller Task Force Monitoring Committee.

One of our main objectives was to have learning and innovations from the Pavee Feens Hawken included in mainstream policy. So, we were delighted when, in 2005 FÁS established its Strategic Initiative for Travellers. This focuses on the development of employment and self-employment responses for Travellers in Galway, Clare, Cork and Dublin.

The learning arising from Pavee Feens Hawken fed directly into this initiative which was extended and in 2008 there were 645 Travellers participating in these FÁS initiatives.

Sadly, austerity measures have obviously had a major impact on Travellers in the jobs market.

Numbers in the FÁS Strategic Initiative dropped to 459 in 2009 and then increased



June 1992, Martin Collins carrying his son Thomas home, Dunsink Lane

again to 570 in 2011. Since then spending rates on these initiatives have been much less than the Government allocation. According to the then Minister, work on these initiatives was integrated and costs were cut. But, at what price?

Social Welfare cuts have had a severe impact on Travellers – especially the majority of young Travellers. There is a set assistance of €100 a week for under 24 year olds but, unlike settled people of the same age, young Travellers are often married early and have families to rear.

Cuts in Community Employment allowances,

which has been a key area for Travellers given the growth in Traveller Community Development Projects, means there are fewer schemes available and they are at a lower rate of pay.

Meanwhile discrimination in the work place remains rife with little positive action in mainstream employment.

Pavee Point's work in the area of economy has led to a greater acceptance of the Traveller Economy at policy level and the need for self-employment initiatives for Travellers. But, our experience is that there is a considerable gap between policy and practical supports.



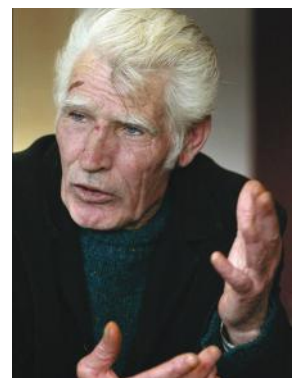
October 2004, Labre Park



March 2004, Pavee Feens Hawken training programme

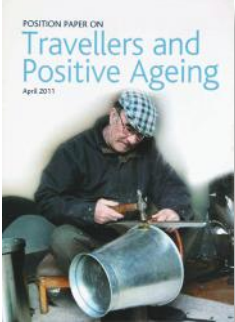


March 2004, Pavee Feens Hawken seminar, Croke Park



March 2004, Tom Sherlock





April 1992, James Collins, Traveller tinsmith. Working in copper and other metals has been a traditional Traveller enterprise for centuries. James Collins's work can be seen at Pavee Point itself and has featured in many of its publications.



# Roma

**“Pavee Point is a place where Roma are working for Roma – this is a huge thing; we are lobbying, we are campaigning – we are trying to move things at the highest levels. We are building a Roma movement,” Gabi Muntean.**

Roma refers to the international Roma community, which is made up of diverse groups throughout the world. Estimates suggest that 8–10 million Roma live in Europe and the Roma population in Ireland is estimated to be 5,000.

Since its foundation Pavee Point has recognised the need for solidarity between Roma and Irish Travellers based on shared similar experiences of racism and discrimination.

As Roma are also a minority ethnic group with a nomadic tradition, the Roma experience of racism and discrimination in Europe helped Pavee Point to identify common ground with the Traveller experience in Ireland.

Thanks to this interconnection and the internationalism of the Roma experience, Pavee Point fought for and succeeded in ensuring that Travellers were explicitly named and included in initiatives for Roma. This is manifested in the European Roma and Traveller Forum (ERTF) of which we are a founder member, it is also in the Council of Europe definition of Roma and in the conclusions of the World Conference Against Racism 2001. Pavee Point has been able to highlight Irish Traveller issues through European anti-racism structures such as the Council of Europe European Commission against Racism & Intolerance (ECRI) and the Framework Con-



April 2014, International Roma Day at Pavee Point Traveller and Roma

Centre





April 2013, Roma protest EU Commission office, International Roma Day, Dublin

vention for the Protection of national Minorities (FCPNM). We have also been able to promote anti-racism issues for Travellers in Ireland by referring to European mechanisms such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter.

Since the foundation of Pavee Point a range of United Nations instruments and mechanisms have been used to highlight the needs of Travellers and Roma in Ireland and to fight for the realisation of their human rights. In particular we have used UN mechanisms to advocate for the recognition of Travellers ethnicity. This has involved developing and submitting 'Shadow Reports' to a range of UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies including the Conventions on Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Civil & Political Rights; Economic Social & Cultural Rights; Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

and the Rights of the Child as well as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). It has also involved participation at UN hearings, when the Irish State is under review, as well as undertaking follow up work at UN and Irish government levels to lobby for the recommendations to be implemented.

Pavee Point began working directly with Roma in Ireland in the late Nineties and in 2001 a Roma Support Group was established within Pavee Point.

In the early days of the Roma Support Group a 'Jobs Club' was set up and English classes were made available. Our centre provided an important meeting point for members of the Roma community and also gave an opportunity for Travellers and Roma to interact.

In 2002 we published a report 'Roma in Ireland – an Initial Needs Assessment' which

gave an outline profile of Roma in Ireland and identified some action points. This was supported by the National Consultative Committee and Interculturalism (NCCRI) and FÁS.

The following year the Roma Support Group and Pavee Point co-hosted a conference on human rights issues for Roma and Ina Zoon, then one of Europe's foremost experts on Roma issues, addressed the conference which was chaired by Anastasia Crickley of the NCCRI.

With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union in 2007, the Government restricted access to the labour market and social supports to their citizens. This impacted severely on the Roma Community in Ireland. It meant Roma were forced to live in precarious conditions, unable to access medical help or even to send their children to school.

These restrictions led to the distressing situation in the summer of 2007 of a group of Roma, who had left their homes on a rubbish tip in Romania, setting up camp on Ballymun roundabout on the M50 motorway in tents and huts and without sanitation.

This created huge media interest and opened the doors for many racist comments and slurs. We engaged with the media on this issue - highlighting the human rights issues for Roma in Ireland and elsewhere and provided a strong anti-racist voice. We also called for basic humanitarian aid for the Roma on the M50 roundabout and a European wide approach to support Roma inclusion.

The Government deported this group from Dublin to Bucharest in July 2007.

In 2010 we established our Roma Project and lobbied further for the removal of labour and social welfare restrictions affecting Roma. These were finally lifted in July 2012.

However, conditions still exist in accessing social welfare - the Habitual Residence Condition - that have a huge negative impact on Roma in Ireland and contribute to high levels of poverty and low levels of access to accommodation, health and education.

In 2012 we decided to officially change our name to Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre in recognition of the interconnection of Travel-



April 2004, International Roma Day, Pavee Point



April 2003, Ina Zoon at Roma Conference International Roma Day



June 2012, Siobhan Curran at launch of AITHS summary report



April 2001, International Roma Day, Pavee Point





April 2013, Monika Makulova at protest EU Commission office, International Roma Day

ler and Roma objectives. The name change also reflects the reality of Roma participation being mainstreamed throughout Pavee Point programmes and illustrates Roma eagerness to be more visible within the Traveller/Roma movement.

In line with our approach of recognising diversity within minority ethnic groups – we have focused some of our work with Roma on specific gender issues including violence against women.

The importance of this work was highlighted in the tragic case of Roma Marioara Rostas who was abducted and murdered in Ireland in 2011. Roma women remain at risk of exclusion and violence as Roma, as migrants and as women.

Roma health and Roma children are other major issues for Pavee Point and we have been working towards setting up a Roma Primary Healthcare Project for the Dublin region. Currently, we liaise between Roma and health service providers and we also work to support the Roma GP bus in Tallaght as well as individual Roma.

In November 2013 two Roma children were removed from their families by Gardaí in, what was later shown to be, a highly discriminatory exercise. The media coverage these events attracted served to highlight Irish society's underlying racism and discrimination towards Roma.



April 2006, International Roma Day, Pavee Point

Pavee Point was able to give much needed support and information to these Roma families during this crisis. We were also able to highlight the media sensationalism around the events.

As a result of these events and a subsequent enquiry, the Department of Justice decided to carry out a National Needs Assessment of the Roma Community in Ireland. Thanks to our involvement with Roma, Pavee Point is undertaking this Assessment in partnership with the Department of Justice thereby ensuring that Roma will be involved in making recommendations on improving the provision of services to Roma.

We see this as a major step forward in identifying Roma needs and acknowledging the racism and discrimination that Roma experience.

In 2014 we also established the Roma Rights Forum – a network for service providers and organisations working with Roma - that offers a space for networking and sharing issues.

We continue to work directly with Roma and to include Roma in the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy, to help the emergence of strong Roma leaders working from a human rights perspective, to increase Roma access to and engagement with health services, improved educational outcomes for Roma children and the promotion of understanding and positive images of Roma.

The main threat to our work with Roma is lack of funding. Due to a lack of resources we risk losing our two Roma Community Development Workers on the project.



August 2014, Roma Holocaust Day, Dublin



April 2014, Realising Roma Childrens Rights Conference



June 2012, Traveller Pride Week screening of 'A People Uncounted'



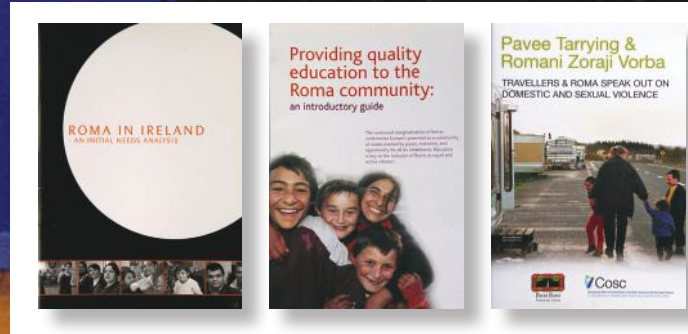


### Roma on Ballymun M50 Roundabout

July 2007, a group of Roma were removed from an encampment on the M50 roundabout at Ballymun and deported. They had moved here that summer from terrible living conditions in Romania. Though from an EU accession state, citizens of Romania were not entitled to work or to social welfare and medical care. Pavee Point fought for their cause but were unable to prevent their deportation to Bucharest in late July.







April 2004,  
Celebrating  
International  
Roma Day at  
Pavee Point



# Accommodation

**Outrage at the dire living conditions of many Travellers was one of the main reasons Pavee Point was founded in 1985. At that time, Travellers had changed from being a rural based community to a community that had moved in significant numbers to urban areas.**

Never before had Traveller and settled communities lived in such close quarters and, with fewer and fewer places for Travellers to move to, for such sustained periods of time.

The Traveller priority was to continue to live in family groups and to be able to move in order to carry out traditional seasonal work or to trade. However, barriers to Travellers using many traditional stopping places plus the requirement of a permanent address to register for social welfare, resulted in the ghettoization of Irish Travellers.

The dominant view among settled people, in terms of accommodation, was that Travellers should stop being nomadic and live in houses. Local opposition to the provision of properly serviced and organised halting sites and group housing schemes for Travellers became politicized at local levels and was sometimes expressed in violent protests.

Pavee Point's first job was to challenge this level of racism and discrimination against Travellers and to highlight Travellers' right to a proper place to live that respects Traveller culture both in terms of family life and work life.

We looked to engage with politicians and key



April 1994, Cara Park Group Housing and Halting site, Coolock, Dublin.





September 1992, Aras an Úachtarán launch of Traveller Accommodation Report



September 2005, Belgard Road Tallaght



January 2002, St Marys Park Cappagh



October 2000, St Olivers Park, Dublin



September 2005, Belgard Road Tallaght

players in the area of Traveller accommodation, including local authorities, settled residents and central government, via meetings and invitations to discuss the issues.

We wanted to highlight the discrimination that exists and to bring positivity and imagination to the whole issue of Traveller accommodation. We linked in with the National Campaign for the Homeless and a sub group on Traveller accommodation was established where we were supported in arguing that nomadism is a valid way of life.

In 1989 we established the Dublin Accommodation Coalition for Travellers whereby we brought any local Traveller groups in the greater Dublin area together to develop a collective response to the crisis in Traveller accommodation. We published, in 1992, a study on Traveller accommodation – No Place to Go - which showed that, among the 606 Traveller families in the greater Dublin area, half had no toilets, water or electricity. It also highlighted the inaction of local authorities in addressing Travellers' accommodation needs.

We worked with the support of President Mary Robinson in developing the President Robinson Awards for Traveller Accommodation in 1993 with Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland. This was an award for architects who designed a halting site scheme that would best meet Traveller needs. These awards were successful in attracting designers' interest and focused on the fantastic potential in accommo-



November 1994, Ballycoolin official halting site, Blanchardstown



November 1994, Traveller Family, Parslickstown, Blanchardstown

dating Traveller culture.

In 1994 we published 'Still No Place to Go' – a follow up to our earlier study – which highlighted the slow rate of progress on Traveller accommodation.

We were centrally involved in the establishment of the Irish Traveller Movement Accommodation Working Group and organised a national conference in Limerick looking at the legal situation.

Pavee Point contributed strenuously, over a number of years, to discussions on Traveller accommodation as part of the Government Task Force on Travellers Committee. The 1995 Task





October 2004, St Josephs Park, Finglas

Force Report, for the first time, acknowledged the need to respect Traveller culture in terms of providing Traveller specific accommodation. It also outlined target figures for the provision of accommodation and a costing for this provision. It also allowed for increased Traveller participation in the provision and maintenance of Traveller specific accommodation.

The report stated the need for a new national body to support local authorities in their provision of Traveller accommodation – a body which would draw up a National Strategy for Traveller accommodation.

However, after the publication of the report, further progress was slow. The Government decided not to go ahead with a national agency for Traveller accommodation but to legally oblige local authorities to draw up five-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees were created and Pavee Point worked with local Traveller groups in making representations on these committees.

Meanwhile, there was a worsening of the situation for Travellers living on the side of the road with the introduction of the Housing (Miscellaneous Act) in April 2002. This Act introduced trespass laws for public lands and also gave greater powers to the Gardaí to evict Travellers. This legislation was enacted despite the publication by the Council of Europe Country Report on Ireland a month earlier, in March 2002, by the European Commission Against



June 2006, Nellie Collins in Cara Park, Coolock with her granddaughter, Kaitlyn

Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). ECRI recommended that those local authorities who didn't make accommodation provision for Travellers should be sanctioned. Instead the State decided to make it illegal to travel in Ireland. Pavee Point, alongside other national Traveller organisations, organised a mass demonstration against these new trespass laws – but to little avail.

We were left with the ridiculous situation

that local authorities, who were responsible for providing Traveller accommodation, were also the people evicting Travellers from local authority lands. This increased hardship for the hundreds of Travellers, including children, forced to live on the side of the road due to lack of Traveller specific accommodation.

The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, which was set up to support local authorities and on which Pavee Point



September 2005, Chrissie Ward and family Belcamp, Coolock



January 2002, Galway

had a seat, produced its first report in 2004.

In this report we were successful in arguing that local authority targets for Traveller accommodation should be realistic and achievable and that the Accommodation Programmes be given a strict timeframe. We also argued for effective consultation with Travellers and that a model of consultation and implementation guidelines be drawn up.

We also sought to use our position on this





May 2002, Sheila Reilly at March against Trespass Act, O'Connell Street

Committee to combat the effects of trespass legislation. It was agreed that local authorities, whenever possible, should not request the Gardaí to move Travellers who were on local authority Traveller accommodation lists. We argued again for a national Traveller Accommodation Agency but this did not happen. We also worked at EU levels to highlight and address Traveller accommodation needs. In 2008 we undertook research on behalf of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) into the housing situation of Travellers.

Lack of a national department/driver has remained a huge stumbling block to progress on Traveller accommodation. Unfortunately local authorities have been either unwilling or unable to deliver on their Traveller accommodation programmes and as a result funding was, year after year, returned to central government – unspent.

We have pointed out that the Government's failure, to date, to recognise Irish Travellers as a minority ethnic group has made the situation worse.

This refusal by the Government has been taken in some quarters as a rejection of the rights of Travellers to culturally appropriate accommodation. In some cases it has been seen as a reversion to the idea of assimilation.

Once the economic crisis hit, Traveller accommodation suffered major setbacks. Funding

dropped from €40 million in 2008 to €4 million in 2013 – a decrease of 90%. And even with this massive decrease in spending, funding was still returned by local authorities – unspent!

We now have the situation that with a Traveller population that marries young and requires more accommodation for young families – little or no new accommodation is being built. This is having a devastating effect on the Traveller community.

There is now serious overcrowding on existing halting sites and group housing schemes as Travellers struggle to remain in their family groups.

Overcrowding and lack of proper maintenance is causing more sickness and ill-health among Travellers.

Many Travellers are being forced to live away from their community and the numbers of Travellers in private rented accommodation has risen by 30%. This is contributing to the further breakdown of Traveller inter-generational solidarity and an increase in stress and mental health issues. Suicide rates among Traveller men have rocketed – and this is seen as no coincidence.

Though nomadism has been effectively outlawed, 800 Travellers are still forced to live on the side of the road with no sewage facilities. (Census 2011)

In the 30 years since the founding of Pavee Point, while there has been a seachange in attitudes in many areas affecting Traveller life, it seems that the political will remains lacking in providing Travellers a decent place to live. This, in turn, continues to affect Traveller/settled relations in an often negative way.

Local authorities have drawn up their 2014 – 2018 Traveller Accommodation Programmes. Providing this accommodation – despite having planning and budgets in place – is more of a human rights issue than ever before. People's prejudice cannot be allowed to take precedence over providing Traveller families with a home.

Pavee Point will continue to use all our resources to highlight the human rights issues involved in providing Traveller accommodation at a national and international level.



14 October 2015, Vigil of solidarity at Carrickmines where ten Travellers died tragically in a fire

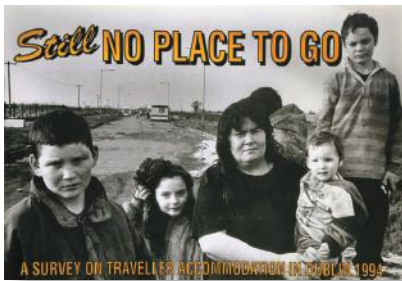
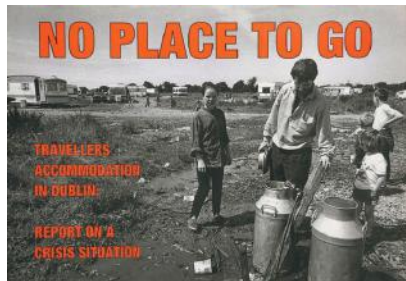


November 2006, McDonnell Camp, Dunsink



28 October 2015, Martin Collins addresses Minceir Whiden rally demanding action on accommodation following the Carrickmines fire





July 1992, the common water supply at an unofficial halting site in Clondalkin. This was the cover image of No Place to Go a report on Traveller accommodation in Dublin which was followed two years later by Still No Place to Go.



# Gender

**When Pavee Point started out it was to give Travellers a voice and to empower Travellers to participate fully in Irish society. As discussions went on among Travellers, and between Travellers and settled people during the early Development Programmes run by Pavee Point, it became apparent that individual Travellers have different needs.**

Older Traveller women, many of whom were mothers of the trainees on the early Traveller Development Programmes, expressed an interest in attending courses for themselves. So it was decided that a Return to Work programme, which we called “New Opportunities for Traveller Women Programme” would be run by Pavee Point for Traveller women specifically.

This was set up in 1987 and we had a job and many an argument with FÁS, or AnCO as it was then called, to persuade them that Yes - Traveller women did want education and training opportunities; Yes - Traveller women would turn up to work regularly; Yes - their husbands would let them go and Yes - they could manage to get their children minded.

Traveller women are in a complex situation in that they are often at the coalface of racism and discrimination against Travellers. It is often women who interact with State services, women who suffer in their homemaking due to lack of accommodation and women who suffer particular health issues.



April 1991, three generations of Traveller women in Belcamp Cara Park

. From left: Julia McCann, Nan McDonagh, Lizzie and Maggie McDonagh and Nellie Collins with her daughter Mary



Also, Traveller women have to deal with sexism from both Traveller and settled men. So Traveller women have a specific experience of discrimination as women, as Travellers and specifically as Traveller women.

Acknowledging the multiple or intersectional forms of discrimination is important in the work of Pavee Point. It is also important in our strategy of developing models of working with Travellers that can be replicated by other organisations.

As Return to Work was geared towards start up economic enterprise, an outcome of the programme was the establishment of the Pavee Laundry on a Traveller site run by Traveller women. However, the significance of such an enterprise as this lay in its importance in providing a focus around which women could organise, reflect on their experiences as Traveller women and approach the broader struggle of feminism.

Pavee Point also played a key role in establishing the National Traveller Women's Forum through planning and hosting regional forum meetings and discussing issues that Traveller women identified. This Forum held its first national meeting in November 1988 and brought together, from all around the country, over 150 Traveller and settled women working with Travellers.

The Forum provided an enjoyable experience for women but was also a powerful tool for change. It allowed for reflection and evaluation and provided a national platform for Traveller women to address their situation. The Forum secured funding for staff in the mid 1990s and is now established as a separate national Traveller organisation.

Recognising the intersectional forms of discrimination that Traveller women experience helped us develop our work in the area of Violence against Women – a problem previously suffered in silence by Traveller women and settled women alike. A dedicated Violence against Women Programme was established in 1998 to address the specific barriers that Traveller women face in accessing information, safety and protection from violence. In more recent years,



November 1993, Molly Collins and Sarah Joyce play Chuckety Chock at Women's Forum Day



April 1997, Women's Forum Day, St Andrews Resource Centre, Dublin



March 1989, International Womens Day



November 1994, Celebrating International Year of the Family, Marino Institute



April 1997, Mary Joyce, at Women's Forum Day



November 1993, more Chuckety Chock

the Programme has begun to address the significant barriers that Roma women face in reporting and seeking help from violence.

One of the key aspects of the work has been to challenge myths around violence against minority ethnic women, particularly the stereotype of violence being part of Traveller and Roma 'culture'. Gender-based violence affects women from all ethnic and social groups, but Traveller and Roma women face additional barriers to mainstream services and protections placing them at further risk of violence. Getting this message across and promoting good practice in service provision and policy development has been a key area of our work through representing at government committees and providing training and good practice guidelines to service providers.

The analysis that informs our work is embedded within acknowledging the gendered nature of domestic and sexual violence, and that violence against women is intrinsically linked with patriarchal power relations and is a manifestation of gender inequality. Since 1999 we have provided training to Traveller groups to build knowledge, capacity and confidence of local groups to recognise and respond to violence against women. We have also produced a number of accessible awareness raising leaflets to Traveller and Roma women on crucial services and protections. Our work has become increasingly inclusive of men, recognising that any preventative effort to eliminate violence needs to include men within the initiatives.

The lives of Traveller women in the prison system are often forgotten and their issues neglected. Pavee Point has increasingly begun to address the issues and needs of female Travellers in the prison system, particularly through recognising the complex interrelation between substance misuse and domestic violence in acting as pathways to offending behaviour. Traveller Pride Week has provided an opportunity for us to meet with Traveller women in the Dóchas during coffee mornings and has allowed us to engage in raising awareness about domestic and sexual violence.



As part of our work on gender equality we have networked and collaborated with female Roma activists outside Ireland, the International Roma Women's Network, the OSCE ODIHR Roma and Sinti Contact Point, and the Council of Europe. This has allowed us to take stock of developments in the area of Roma women's rights and social inclusion at a wider scale and feed into policy priorities at international level.

Our work has also focused on addressing the multifaceted issues and needs of Roma women within Ireland. At a national level, we have engaged in mapping out the significant gaps in Roma maternal health in Ireland through conducting research on 'Roma Maternal Health – Challenging Barriers and Misconceptions', and organising thematic events on Roma and Traveller women's rights.

Challenging internal as well as external oppression and all types of taboos within the Traveller community is part of the fearless spirit of Pavee Point. Pavee Point has always taken the risk of alienating some people in our belief in addressing what may be sensitive issues. This risk taking has paid off manifold in the interest and support shown for our work.



November 2014, 16 days of action on Violence Against Women



March 2015, Tessa Collins, International Womens Day



March 2015, Kathleen Lawrence, International Womens Day



February 2012, Vigil for Marioara Rostas Dublin



April 2015, Roma women at presentation of certificates for Roma Peer Researchers



November 2014, Pavee Point



November 2014, Rebecca McDonagh



March 2015, Mary Collins International Womens Day





September 1999, Sheila Keenan looks out her window at Cappagh Field, Finglas, Dublin. She also looks out of our annual report 2000



# Drugs and Emerging Issues

**In the late 1990s Traveller Primary Health Care Workers identified substance misuse as an emerging health issue and highlighted that drug misuse was impacting their community, accompanied by the social problems often associated with addiction.**

When Pavee Point first started to respond to the drugs issue there was widespread denial of a problem both within the Traveller community, among Traveller organisations and in mainstream drugs services.

We succeeded in getting funding through the EU Youthstart Community Initiative in 1998. As part of this initiative we commissioned research into drug misuse within the Traveller community; raised awareness of the issue among Traveller organisations throughout Ireland; developed contacts with mainstream drug service providers and developed culturally appropriate materials addressing drugs misuse.

The Drug & Alcohol Programme was established in November 2000 and was known as the Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative until 2010. The central focus of the programme is the promotion of Traveller inclusion in national, regional and local responses developed to address substance misuse and to support Traveller



June 2012, 'Celebration of Recovery - Knock Booze on the Head...Have

the Craic Instead' - a conference held at Croke Park as part of Traveller Pride week.



organisations to tackle these issues within the community.

Traveller specific drug and alcohol awareness training and education is provided. A network where Traveller organisations and service providers can discuss issues and share information was established and we facilitate Traveller Peer Support Workers who have come through drug and alcohol addiction.

We also deliver training workshops on promoting Traveller access to treatment and rehabilitation to Traveller organisations and mainstream services. Support is provided to local and regional drug and alcohol task forces including Traveller representatives who are members of the task forces.

We aim to influence policy and practice through policy submissions on drugs policy including engaging in consultation processes on the development of the national substance misuse strategy.

Following research into the experiences of Travellers using drugs that was undertaken in 2010, a peer support worker programme was delivered to address the significant misinformation and alienation from services experienced by Traveller drug service users. International research shows that the peer support model is an effective method for reducing barriers to entry into mainstream services for marginalised groups. The programme has proven successful in supporting Travellers to access mainstream services. Good practice guidelines for services were also developed and there continues to be a demand for training in Pavee Pathways.

Conferences are also organised to highlight the issues and during Traveller Pride Week 2012 a major conference ‘Celebration of Recovery-Knock Booze on the Head have the Craic Instead’ was organised in Croke Park.

We also promoted and supported the introduction of an ethnic identifier in the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS). As well as conducting our own research we have played a crucial role in supporting research by the National Advisory Committee on Drugs and the Irish Penal Reform Trust. The needs of Traveller prisoners and homeless Travellers



December 2009, John Paul Collins at launch of DVD ‘Pavee Whiden’ on Travellers and drug misuse



December 2009, Launch of DVD ‘Pavee Whiden’



June 2006 Mental Health Initiative burning worries and identifying hopes for future

emerged as concerns through the work of our Drugs programme.

### Emerging Issues:

In recent years Traveller mens’ health needs were highlighted in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study where suicide rates among Traveller men were shown to be 6.7 times higher than in the general population. Male reluctance to talk about mental health issues and to engage with the health services on general health issues is seen as a barrier to Traveller Men’s health.

To help engage with Traveller men we organised a project whereby Traveller men built a Grotto on their site in Cappagh Field. When the Grotto was finished, the Irish Heart Foundation were invited to talk to the men in relation to blood pressure and cholesterol issues.

Similarly a Traveller Men’s Health Day was organised by the Traveller Health Unit in the Eastern Region and a Soccer Tournament was organised in the Phoenix Park in 2014 involving all the Primary Health Care Projects in the Eastern Region. Two hundred Traveller men participated and continue to respond to outreach work on health issues.

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study highlighted that there is a significantly higher burden of mental illness within the Traveller community which is a reflection of the broader social determinants of health- including the impact of racism and discrimination on Travellers mental health and self-esteem.

There continues to be stigma in relation to mental health among the Traveller community. Pavee Point has been working to develop a range of responses to mental health concerns among Travellers including the promotion of positive mental health and well-being; facilitating Traveller access to, and outcomes from, mainstream mental health services; supporting the development of culturally competent & appropriate mental health services for Travellers and impacting on mental health policy and research. It is imperative that the specific needs of Travellers are addressed in any mental health



May 2014, Launch of Irish Penal Reform Trust research report on Travellers in prison



May 2015, Mental Health Green Ribbon campaign

initiatives, policies, programmes or services being developed

Intergenerational work within the Traveller community has been prioritised since 2012. As part of the ‘European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations’ we published a book ‘Pavees Travelling through the Generations’. The book provides an insight into the lives of Irish Travellers from several genera-



tions in their own words. It documents some of the changes that have taken place during their lives – the move from being a largely rural people travelling the roads and earning a living tinsmithing and doing seasonal farm work, to the move to urban centres and participating in formal education and training programmes. The intergeneration exhibition and book was launched by Micheal O Muircheartaigh. A poster documenting the changes in the lives of Traveller women across 3 generations was also produced.

This important work is carried out in the belief that Travellers can only enjoy human rights when all Travellers - rich, poor, men, women, children, young, old, single, married, separated, divorced, healthy and ill, disabled and able, LG-BTQI, addicts and non-addicts can enjoy their full human rights.

It is vital that Travellers have an opportunity to learn and discuss all issues, make informed responses and as a result feel empowered to participate fully in society.

Travellers and Roma who are LGBTQI face intersectional forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and sexuality. The need to recognise and tackle the oppression that LG-BTQI Travellers and Roma face both within and outside their communities has become increasingly the focus of Pavee Point's work. As part of this, we campaigned towards achieving marriage equality for LGBTQI people in the May 2015 referendum.

Working together with BeLongTo and LGBT Pavee in 2011, Pavee Point focused on exploring issues around sexuality and physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of young LGBTQI Travellers and Roma. This collaboration gave rise to an awareness raising initiative to increase dialogue around sexuality and gender identity in Traveller and Roma communities, and ultimately to create an environment of acceptance for young Travellers and Roma to 'come out'.

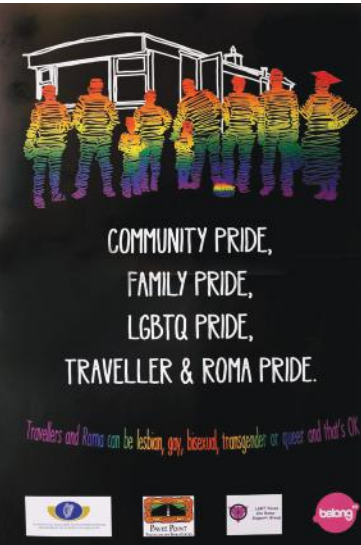
As part of this initiative, a number of focus groups were held with young Traveller women and men to explore issues faced by young LG-BTQI people and to develop an awareness rais-



September 2012, Intergeneration Project, Pavee Point



December 2012, Launch of Intergeneration Project



December 2012, Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh at launch of Intergeneration Project



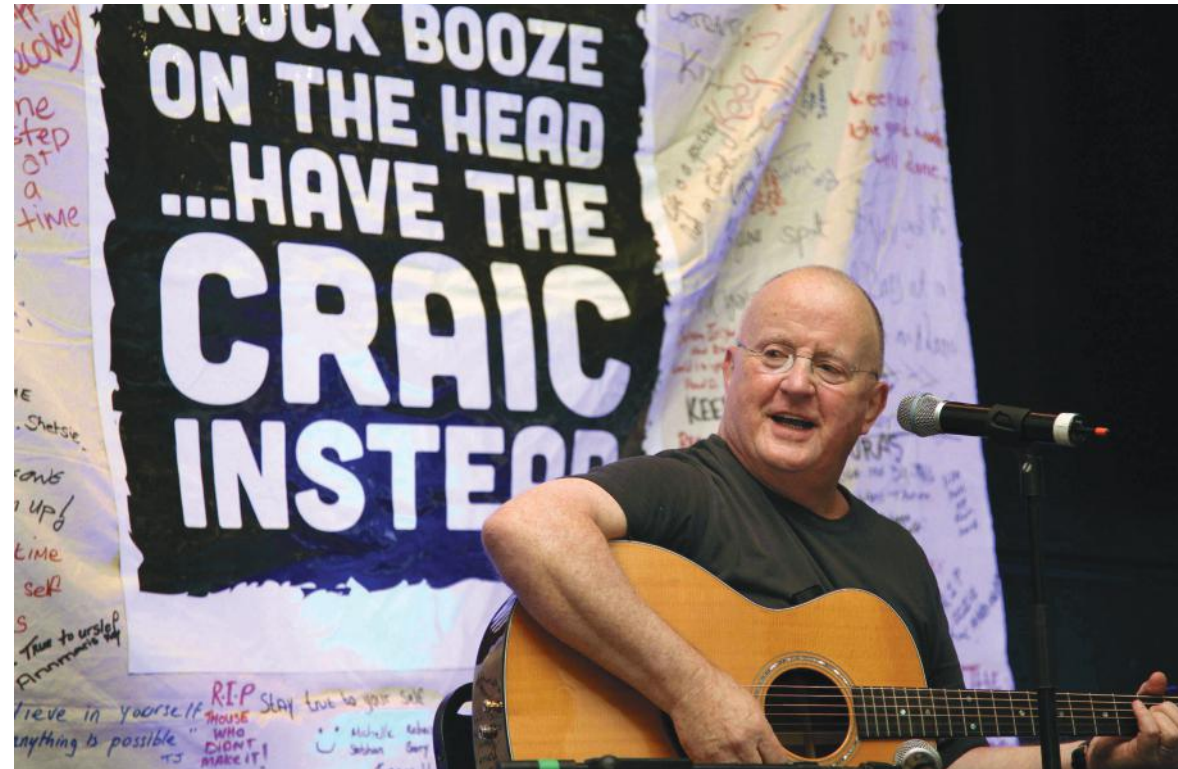
February 2015, Hilary Harmon



ing poster targeted for Traveller and Roma communities. The poster was developed to increase the visibility of LGBTQI Travellers and Roma both within and outside their communities, as well as increase dialogue around the inclusion of Traveller and Roma LGBTQI issues within the wider LGBTQI movement.

Beyond the national context, Pavee Point has engaged with agencies at transnational level with a specific focus on exploring the impact of intersectional forms of discrimination on LGBTQI Travellers and Roma. Pavee Point presented at 'Breaking the Barriers' transnational workshop on discrimination against Roma and Travellers in Finland in 2014 exploring and sharing good practice models on promoting the rights of LGBTQI Travellers and Roma. Considering the persistent marginalisation of LGBTQI people and Travellers and Roma, the promotion of the rights of Traveller and Roma LGBTQI people requires concerted and intensified efforts.





### Celebration of Recovery

June 2012, among the entertainers at 'Celebration of Recovery - Knock Booze on the Head... Have the Craic Instead', was singer and songwriter Christy Moore. At the event, GAA All Star Oisín McConville and Thomas Joyce were interviewed by broadcaster Matt Cooper.







September 2005, skating ahead at newly built Traveller accommodation in Tallaght. The picture graced the cover of Pavee Point's 2006-2007 Annual Report



# Youth and Children

**With 42% of the Traveller population under 15 years of age, Traveller youth and children have always been a major consideration of Pavee Point. Our very first Traveller Development Programme attracted young people and some of these participants went on to become the first Traveller youth and community workers.**

Part of our approach is the understanding that Traveller children are a minority within a minority. Traveller children suffer all the ill effects of inadequate accommodation, poor living conditions and discrimination. In addition, children are especially vulnerable to ill health and poor physical development and can be subject to disadvantages in emotional and cognitive development.

Through our Primary Health Care Project we have focused on mother and baby care. We have also addressed childcare issues for Travellers. We carried out a study, 'Pavee Children' published in 1997, which looked at the issues for Traveller parents and children and the possibilities of Travellers working in Traveller specific early childhood services.

Listening to young Travellers, identifying their needs and trying to make sure their voices are heard has always provided the motivation for our work in this area.

In 1998 we held a conference 'Respect' Education without Prejudice a challenge for early years educators in Ireland'. The keynote speaker Louise Derman-Sparks from the United States



November 2001, Albie McDonagh, Cara Park Coolock





August 2005, McDonnell Dancers, Dunsink Dublin

developed an anti-bias approach for empowering young children and adults to address diversity and equality issues within early childhood.

This conference attracted a huge response and people agreed there was a need to develop a diversity and equality approach within the Irish context for the early childhood sector. Pavee Point established a Consultative Group with key partners in the early childhood field. The consultation was supported by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

The result of this partnership approach was the project and 2001 publication 'éist' Respect-ing Diversity in early childhood care, education and training'. The Justice Department and the Bernard Van Leer Foundation continued to support the project and a training module and manual 'Ar an mBealach' was developed and accredited by Maynooth University. Awareness raising packs were also developed.

In 2009, twelve early childhood trainers were trained nationally in the approach. In 2011 the training module was delivered through a national project administered by the County Childcare Committees and was co-ordinated and delivered nationally by the former 'éist' co-ordinator and

trainers. The evaluation of the project showed high quality outcomes.

This work developed in Pavee Point continues to have an impact in the early childhood sector. However, due to funding cuts, the project was unable to continue in Pavee Point - limiting its huge potential to radically influence the early childhood sector.

Pavee Point was also a founding member of the Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training European Network DECET and, within this network 'éist' supported the development of diversity materials and training and also worked with the Office of the Minister of Children to produce Diversity guidelines.

The 'Voice of the Child' project also developed from 'éist'. In early 2004 a number of other Traveller organisations and the Pavee Point Youth Work team set the objective to enable young Travellers to voice their opinions on a variety of issues they identified as important to them. Previous efforts at a national level, at that time, had failed to reflect fully the voices, opinions and concerns of young Travellers.

In 2012 the 'éist' project worked in partnership with Eurochild on the 'Speak Up' project. This project looked at how Traveller children and children from other groups understood their rights in relation to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our direct youth work with young Travellers has continued since 1985 in Finglas and Cap-pagh and in Coolock in North Dublin. Prior to our involvement with Traveller youth, most youthwork had been purely recreational and sports oriented. We, on the other hand, introduced a developmental approach.

Our youth projects have varied depending on the particular context at a given time but we always work using a critical social model of informal education and recreational programmes.

Before the economic crisis, for example, our work included drug youth leadership programmes, drug and alcohol education, Traveller culture and heritage programmes, human rights education and football tournaments.

Video and photography have continued to prove to be useful tools in working with young



May 1994, Traveller Mobile Pre-School, Dublin



February 1997, Chrissie Joyce welcomes Austin Currie



April 2005, Drugs Strategy Seminar Dublin



April 2005, Drugs Strategy Seminar Dublin



May 2001, Traveller Pre-School, Dublin



May 2004, Clonmel



May 2001, Traveller Pre-School, Dublin



September 1999, Dublin



Travellers. A recent video on ‘water’, and a focus on water supply to some Travellers sites – or the lack of it - attracted attention. Both the video and the process of making it was features on RTE News2Day in 2014.

Being able to employ trained Traveller youth workers has helped Traveller youth groups to connect more with mainstream youth provision. In 2015, for example, we are participating in Big Drama - a ten week drama workshop run by Dublin City Council and the City of Dublin Youth Service Board.

Pavee Point represents young Travellers at a variety of fora including the National Youth Council and the Office of the Minister for Children. Our youth work programme provides assistance and training to mainstream groups engaging with young Travellers. In 2014 our youth programme held focus groups to feed into the National Youth Strategy developed by the Government.

Since the economic crisis in 2008 funding for Traveller specific youth projects have suffered a 28.9% decrease in funding so we were obliged to go into ‘survival’ mode and reduce both full and part-time hours with little new developmental work. However work in relation to sexual education, cyberbullying and mental health was progressed.

As time marches on new challenges are thrown up in engaging with Traveller youth. Whereas young Travellers today are more aware of discrimination and racism than their counterparts thirty years ago, the continued denigration of Traveller culture and identity has resulted in other issues.

The recent All Ireland Traveller Health Study revealed the suicide rate among Traveller males is 6.6 times higher than that of the general population. However, it is very difficult to locate age appropriate services with the cultural awareness needed for young Travellers at risk.

We need to build young people’s capacity and advocate for the necessity of early intervention and advocate for more age appropriate services.



June 2005, Women's Mini-Marathon participants leaving Pavee Point, fundraising for Concern



December 2009, UN Human Rights Day



June 2006, 'A Shared Vision' Early Childhood Conference, Pavee Point



March 2008, Niall Crowley and Prof. Peter Moss at the launch of Equality & Diversity Early Childhood National Network



June 2013, Louise Derman-Sparks



June 2013, EDENN Conference

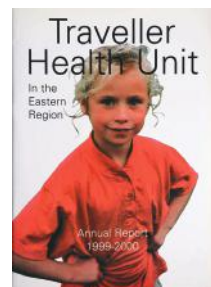


May 2010, Brigid and Paddy Collins, Pavee Point





September 1999, Kathleen McDonagh, St Christopher's Field, Blanchardstown. She featured on the Traveller Health Unit, Eastern Region Annual Report 1999-2000





# Cultural Action

**One of the founding aims of Pavee Point was to develop a better knowledge and understanding of Travellers' history and culture. We believed this would develop self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence among Travellers and so enable Travellers to participate more fully in Irish society.**

Little was written or recorded regarding Traveller culture, as it is an oral culture. As such it has been neglected, with notable exceptions, by Irish society in general. Travellers do not exist in conventional text books or history books and were not (are not) included in school curricula. So, Travellers rarely learn anything about their origins or the causes of their exclusion in Irish society.

Traveller history, language and culture was one of the main areas covered on our early Development Programmes and continues to be very important today. The Traveller language – Cant or Gammon – was a particular source of interest during our early programmes and a Traveller attended some of these early sessions to teach aspects of the language. In our second course older Traveller women came to demonstrate flower making, for example – a skill developed by Traveller women to create paper flowers they could sell door to door.

In this way, Traveller culture projects have also provided a strong link between the older and younger Traveller generations with older



May 1992, James Collins playing at the National Traveller Arts Festival in Pavee Point





17 March 1989, Participating in St Patricks Day parade Dublin



May 1995, Biddy Collins, Sheila Reilly and Annie Maughan



November 1993, Cultural Heritage Programme



April 1992, Mary McCann flower making

Travellers given the space to talk about, and hand down, some of their traditions.

Indeed, documenting and preserving aspects of Traveller heritage has become a major concern of Pavee Point. When we moved into Pavee Point 1990 we were able to establish our Traveller Culture and Heritage Centre. Slide shows on different elements of Traveller culture were developed including documenting Travellers experience of nomadism where Travellers spoke about the cultural, economic, social and political aspects of travelling. A folklore project documenting the life of Travellers from throughout Ireland resulted in the publication of Traveller Ways, Traveller Words in 1992.

It is now possible for Travellers and visitors from all over the world to walk into a centre and

see and learn about Traveller heritage – tin-smithing, storytelling, instrument making and playing, Traveller songs - all of which contributed in a very significant way to Irish society in general.

Other customs and traditions are very important to the Traveller community internally – such as keeping and collecting buttons to remember friends and share past event and Traveller style of dress.

A Traveller library at Pavee Point also offers the opportunity to collect books and pamphlets either produced by Travellers, or about Travellers, as references for future generations.

Pavee Point has run numerous successful Cultural and Heritage projects including collecting and recording these aspects of Traveller



May 1995, The Pecker Dunne, National Traveller Arts Festival Mountjoy Square



April 1992, Des Leech teaching accordion Cultural Heritage Programme



April 1992, Traveller Tinsmith Davy Collins



culture. These have then been celebrated in book, video or CD.

Passing on knowledge and respect for Traveller heritage continues to be very important in our work with young Travellers. A project to involve young Travellers in uileann piping was organised with Na Píobairí Uileann.

Celebrating Traveller culture has also been a priority. Back in 1995 we had the National Traveller Arts Festival and since then various initiatives have worked to celebrate Traveller culture including Citizen Traveller, Traveller Focus Week - now Traveller Pride Week, St Patrick's Day parade showcasing Traveller identity.

Although it is vital that Traveller traditions are preserved - culture is not just something in a museum, a centre or on stage. Our work on cultural action has shown that culture is something that lives within a community.

As defined by numerous international human rights bodies, culture covers the values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, traditions, institutions and ways of life through which a person or a group expresses their humanity.

So, culture is not just tangible items but also the ways in which people communicate, the way people raise their children, engage with the elders within their community, the way people organise for work and deal with birth and death. These are things that change and develop over time.

Traveller lives have changed hugely within a few generations and in recognition of this we developed a multi generational project begun in 2013. The project brought Travellers of different ages together to exchange about Traveller life in the past and Traveller culture now. The publication 'Travelling Through the Generations' gives an idea of the work.

Pavee Point has worked hard to identify and highlight important aspects of Traveller 'way of life' today. This is important in terms of communicating Travellers' needs to the settled population and, in particular, to service providers.

If within Traveller culture, for example, living and work space are often the one – there is no point in banning Travellers from carrying



April 1992, Nellie Joyce, Womens Programme Pavee Point



April 1991, Setting up camp Cultural Heritage Programme Edenderry



January 2003, Rosaleen McDonagh, Baby Doll play



May 1995, Actor Michael Collins



May 1995, Keenans, National Traveller Arts Festival



December 2007, Molly Collins launches 'Pavee Beoirs Our lives in the 20th century'



February 2003, Mary Cassidy launch of Whisht CD



February 2007, Rainey CD launch, Letterfrack





February 2003, Mickey and Niamh Dunne at Whisht CD launch



December 2006, Martin Antony Collins Rainey CD launch



April 1992, Lucy Reilly shows the art of making flowers



September 1999, Patrick and James Collins



December 2005, Keenan Family Ennis perform at Traveller Focus Week Concert

out businesses on their group housing scheme or halting site. Instead, this aspect of Traveller culture should be respected and planned for. Respect for Traveller culture would contribute to successfully running halting sites and group housing schemes.

Certain aspects of Traveller culture have been practically eradicated – nomadism, for example. Understanding that Travellers move within specific regions, and do so in order to facilitate trade or avoid conflict, could be used to help Travellers escape from a poverty trap created by the welfare system.

More recently, due to the accommodation crisis experienced by many Travellers, Traveller family life is under threat as more and more Travellers find themselves separated from their community and forced to live in isolated situations in the private rented sector, for example.

Lack of acknowledgement for the strong family and community ties that exist among Travellers means that many Traveller halting sites or group housing schemes are overcrowded and this puts Traveller physical health and mental health at greater risk.

For these reasons Traveller culture is at the heart of achieving human rights and better living conditions for one of the country's most vulnerable groups. As the Government stated in its second report on the implementation of the 1995 Task Force Report: "Denial of Travellers' cultural identity exacerbates Travellers' daily experience of exclusion."

Pavee Point has also worked with the Irish Human Rights Commission to promote an understanding of the Cultural Rights of Travellers. We produced a joint report on Travellers Cultural Rights in 2008 and have used the most up-to-date decisions and reports of European Human Rights organisations to lobby the Government to improve the situation for Travellers.

Recognising the input made by Travellers to Irish culture is central to the integrity of the project of Irish intercultural society. Protecting the cultural identity and heritage of Travellers has intrinsic value by ensuring diversity and enriching the shared cultural experience of Irish people.





December 2007, Brigid Collins singing at the relaunch as a CD of 'Songs of the Irish Travellers', traditional ballads and lyric songs recorded and edited by Tom Munnely, one of four CDs produced by Pavee Point.



# Discrimination

**Recognising Travellers as a minority ethnic group is probably the single most important contribution Pavee Point has made to Irish society as a whole. John O'Connell first articulated this analysis in 1985 and since then we have struggled to bring this analysis forward in a consistent and structured way and at a variety of levels.**

We saw that assimilationist policies, and trying to force Travellers to behave like settled people, only served to increase racism and discrimination against Travellers and engender bad relations between Travellers and settled communities.

Previous analysis of the Traveller situation had not brought about any kind of improvement in Traveller life. Despite Government policy shifts from assimilation to integration between the 1960s and the 1980s – an assimilationist approach remained and there were few improvements in living conditions for Travellers.

The mindset of the state towards Travellers largely remained that as perceiving Travellers as failed settled people. Pavee Point saw that recognition by the State of Traveller ethnicity is vital to the future of the Traveller community. Failing to recognise Traveller ethnicity is to fail to recognise that Travellers have a specific Traveller experience of life in Ireland. It is only with a general respect for Traveller difference that the different needs of Travellers can be met



November 1988, a protest against Travellers having to use Castle

Street, then a centralised and segregated supplementary welfare office for Travellers only



- thereby giving Travellers equal opportunity within society.

An ethnic group is a group that has a long shared history and is seen as different by others and sees itself as being different. It has a shared culture, traditions and way of life.

In the 1990s, Pavee Point worked to build up an understanding of this analysis both within the Traveller community and in the general population. Progress was slow but steady. By the middle of the 1990s, the Task Force Report had acknowledged Traveller culture. We lobbied to have Travellers named as a group in the 1989 Incitement to Hatred Act which gave weight to their inclusion in the Employment Equality Act 1998 and subsequently in the Equal Status Act 2000.

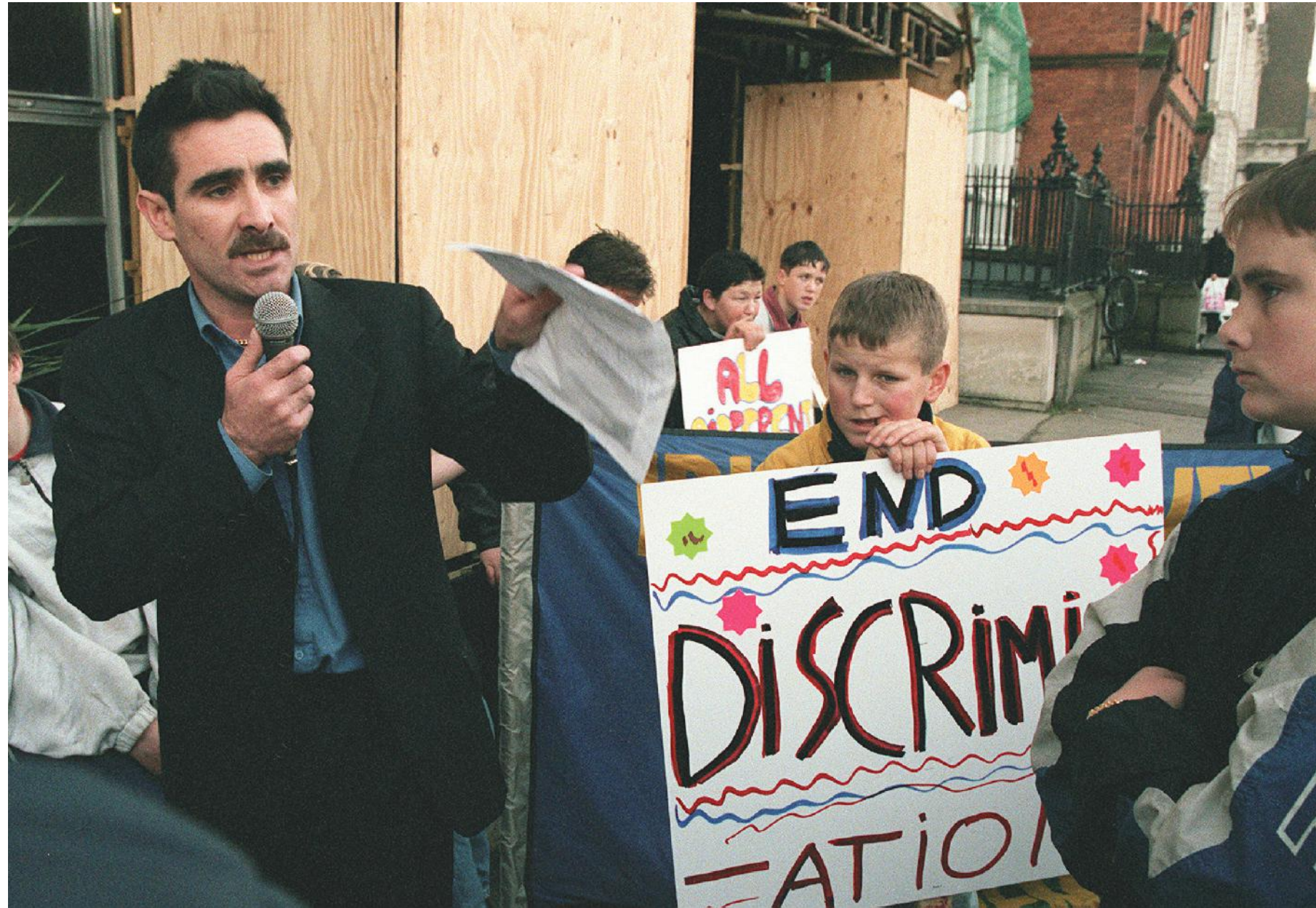
The Equal Status Act meant that Travellers, for the first time, had legal redress in the face of individual racism and discrimination in the provision of goods and services on the grounds of being a Traveller. This was certainly a milestone. However the situation continues that Travellers cannot take a case against discrimination under the race ground.

But equality is not just about redress, it's also about promoting positive action as was acknowledged in the Equal Status Act with the establishment of the Equality Authority. This Authority was given power to promote positive action and to help mainstream equality into general policy.

In our own work we mirror these ideas. We have seen that to achieve equality it is necessary to have specific supports that will promote Traveller inclusion.

One of the supports promoted by Pavee Point was the Traveller Internship Programme in the Civil Service. This programme consisted of placing 23 Travellers in Clerical Officer or General Operative positions in the Civil Service for six months. From the Government side this was led by the Equality Unit of the Department of Finance.

The Public Appointments Service adjusted its procedures slightly so that application forms, for example, were more accessible to Travellers. Twice as many applicants sought entry to the



December 1998, Martin Collins protesting outside the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on UN Human Rights Day.

programme than places were available. Overall the experience proved very positive both for Travellers and for the Civil Service. Sadly, this internship programme was later abandoned due to austerity measures.

Other elements essential to equality, for us, are Traveller Proofing and data collection.

We have argued that without reliable data it is difficult to assess situations on the ground and identify needs or areas of discrimination. However, it is vital that any question on Traveller ethnicity be asked in the context of general ethnicity. Travellers alone should not be singled out to answer a question on their ethnic identity



December 1995, Thomas McCann, UN Human Rights Day



April 1989, Cinema in Nenagh

- as this could lead to further discrimination.

Before these issues were advanced by Pavee Point, the Government did not collect important socio-economic and demographic data that is vital for planning and policy development.

We are not in favour of crude or inappropriate ways of collecting, what is potentially sensi-





December 2006, Protest at Four Courts following Pdraig Nally acquittal

tive data. We also acknowledge the need for safeguards to be built in to protect against the inappropriate use of data. But, there is a potential for timely data to play a huge role in combatting discrimination and racism. As a result of participation in the Task Force on Travellers, where we were constantly challenged by the state to provide 'evidence' to support our policy proposals since 1994. Pavee Point has campaigned for the collection of ethnic data and ethnic equality monitoring. This resulted in the Central Statistics Office (CSO) agreeing to collect data on Travellers in Census 1996.

However in Census 1996 it was the enumerator who identified whether someone was a Traveller - which led to unreliable information. In Census 2002 only Travellers were asked on the Census form to identify their ethnicity - which made many Travellers suspicious of the question. Pavee Point lobbied hard for a general ethnic question, which everybody answers, to be included in National Census information and this occurred in 2006 with the introduction of a question on ethnic/cultural background. This allowed, for the first time, comparable data in relation to Traveller family size, household

numbers and other important factors in improving living conditions for Irish Travellers.

From the outset this Census question was a compromise question but recognised as an important start of a process in the collection of data on ethnicity. The question included 'cultural background' as otherwise it would have excluded Travellers, the group which had campaigned so hard for the introduction of a Census question on ethnicity, because the State does not recognise Travellers as a minority ethnic group. The question should be dynamic and be regularly updated to reflect the growing diversity within the country however this question has remained unchanged since Census 2006.

Traveller Proofing takes the idea of mainstreaming equality into general policy a step further by setting up mechanisms whereby public policy is scrutinised and appraised or 'proofed' in terms of its impact on minority groups – in this case Travellers.

In 2002 we produced a report 'Traveller Proofing – Within an Equality Framework' that analyses this issue and makes recommendations.

In 2013 seminars were organised focusing on Data Collection within a Human Rights Framework.

In 2014 the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act merged the Irish Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority. This Act also introduced a modest, proactive public sector duty to try and embed equality and human rights considerations in public sector policies.

Earlier in 2015 we ran a seminar 'Public Sector Duty – a positive duty in mainstreaming equality and human rights on a statutory basis in Ireland' to look at the provisions in this Act and ways of moving Equality Proofing and Traveller Proofing forward.

We see this as an area with plenty of potential for engagement and collaboration in promoting codes of practice and generating equal outcomes for Travellers across a variety of public services – education, health, accommodation, training and employment. In 2015 we published 'A Guide to Ethnic Data Collection in Ireland'.



Ethnic question CSO Census form



October 2004, The removal of Dunsink barrier following protests by Travellers



November 2013, Prof. Raj Bhopal, Data Seminar



February 2011, launch of CERD report

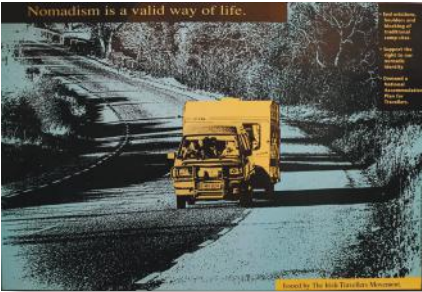


April 2007, Brigid Collins Department of Taoiseach Internship Programme



February 2015, Emily Logan at Public Sector Duty Seminar





December 1990, on the road again, Navan, Co Meath - used as an image on the poster 'Nomadism is a Valid Way of Life'



# Mediation

**Pavee Point would be the first to recognise the damage and destruction that conflict can cause. Conflict between Traveller and the settled community has often resulted in poor outcomes for Travellers. Conflict within the Traveller community, as within any community, is often a negative force.**

That's why Pavee Point established in 1999 the country's only Traveller Mediation Service, funded by the Department of Justice and Equality. This service set out to address conflict and build better relations between Travellers and settled people and within the Traveller community.

Our innovative approach is to transform conflict and to use it to build relationships instead of destroying relationships.

Conflict and sometimes, violent conflict is often the result of a dispute – a dispute where no attempt was made to find a solution or where attempts to find a solution failed.

We encourage the application of mediated settlements to resolve disputes and conflicts, and never condone the use of violent methods of conflict resolution. Mediation involves the participation of a third party trained to negotiate a resolution agreed between the two parties.

When the project was set up, we were concerned about the consequences for Travellers of disempowering relations and confrontations with the authorities - particularly the Gardaí, we also focused, where necessary, on conflict between Travellers.



October 1994, group discussion Pavee Point





September 1999, President Mary McAleese launches Mediation Service



November 2011, President Mary McAleese visits Pavee Point



November 2011, Pavee Point

The service responded to situations signalled by Traveller and settled individuals, Traveller organisations and other organisations and businesses around the country. Different responses were necessary in varying situations.

One case study highlights the way the service operated. In 2006, a number of incidents involving hoax calls to emergency services were reported in the media one of which took place on a Traveller site. This resulted in an attack on members of the Fire Brigade when they came to the site.

Local Travellers contacted the Mediation service and we offered to support their actions. A petition was organised expressing Traveller outrage at the hoax and also at the attack on the Fire Brigade. This was received very positively by the Fire Service.

We then arranged a meeting between Travellers and the Fire Brigade to discuss the safety of fire crews on sites and fire safety in general. We also sought a meeting with the Department of Justice and Equality to highlight the need to address anti-social behaviour, which on some Traveller accommodation as well as on some settled housing estates, is causing fear and disruption.

Through our casework we identified recurring issues of conflict between Traveller and settled communities relating to racism, service provision, accommodation, drugs and anti-social behaviour and policing. As a result, we brought these issues to the attention of the relevant groups and developed initiatives to address them. For example we had regular meetings with the Garda Racial and Intercultural Unit and promote Traveller recruitment to the Gardaí.

For many years now we have also undertaken anti-racism training with Garda trainees in Templemore Training College. This provides a useful opportunity to introduce ideas of power and prejudice when dealing with minority ethnic groups.

We've also worked with the Dublin City Council with regard to letting schemes for Travellers plus the maintenance of Traveller specific



September 2002, training in mediation



February 1996, Geraldine McDonnell and John O'Connell



November 2011, Traveller Peace Pin





accommodation.

Workshops on conflict, including internal conflict, have been successful when working with Traveller groups. In one situation this was done in a discussion group following the performance of the play 'Stuck' by Rosaleen McDonagh. This play looks at intimidation and power within the Traveller community.

Increasingly, as nomadism becomes more restricted and Travellers come under pressure to settle, traditional Traveller ways of dealing with internal and external conflict have come under strain. One of the major ways to deal with conflict or the threat of conflict was to move. This is no longer an option.

There is a need to find alternative ways to resolve conflicts situations and to build Traveller capacity to take part in the resolution process.

As one participant said after the discussion: 'It helped you to have an understanding that things can be solved in a different manner without making them bigger'.

Despite a favourable evaluation in 2006 by the Department of Justice which said the service had made a valuable contribution to conflict resolution – funding was withdrawn and the project had to be dropped.

Some aspects, such as anti-racism training with the Gardaí, is continued by other projects within the organisation. Casework, however, has ceased.



March 2007, attending the national conference '**The Traveller Community - Reflections and Challenges in Public Service Delivery**' organised by Pavee Point Traveller Centre, in partnership with the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, in consultation with The Irish Human Rights Commission, Pobal, the Family Support Agency, The Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform and the Equality Commission Northern Ireland





September 1999, at the Pavee Subl  s St Luke's ABC, Coolock. Foreground: Stephen Collins and Richard McCann, Background: Michael Collins, Michael Collins, John Paul Collins and Patrick McCann. This picture featured in the Pavee Calendar 2000



# Lobbying

**Before Pavee Point, Travellers were not formally consulted by any Government Commission or Committee set up to 'deal' with Traveller issues. The 1963 Commission consisted of ten members representing the law, the church, local government, education and agriculture.**

In 1980 the Review Body on Travellers consisted of 23 members, adding to the above with representatives of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, tenants' associations, the Departments of Labour and the Environment, social workers, and three Traveller and seven settled representatives of the National Council for Travelling People.

From our point of view, the National Council for Travelling People operated on a well intentioned but flawed understanding of the Traveller Community and when it disbanded in 1990, we took on the role, along with the Irish Traveller Movement and the National Traveller Women' Forum of giving Travellers a voice at national level.

Political engagement, was and is, a key feature of the work of Pavee Point. As a result of lobbying we got Government commitment to set up a Task Force on the Traveller Community in 1993. Two representatives from Pavee Point and one from the Irish Traveller Movement were appointed to this committee. This was the first time that Traveller organisations informed by a human rights perspective had been included



May 2002, Travellers protest against new trespass law which

criminalised their nomadic way of life, O'Connell Street





December 2009, Michael Collins, International Human Rights Day



December 2008, Minister for Communications Eamonn Ryan Traveller Focus Week



June 1994, Petition for an Anti-discrimination Act to Minister for Justice and Equality Mervyn Taylor



May 2011, Nellie Collins shows Minister for Equality Kathleen Lynch

around Pavee Point at Bealtaine Festival

on any committee set up to decide on Traveller issues.

It took determination and organisation to provide consistent and regular inputs into these committee meetings. Good internal communication and organisation were necessary to ensure continuity. Our involvement with this Committee lead to further participation on the committees that were setup as a result of the Task Force Report.

It should be remembered that in mainstream policy development, at that time, there was little or no reference to Travellers. Travellers, for example, did not feature in Government education policy or economic policy until well after the publication of the Task Force Report 1995.

As well as engaging directly with the Government, Pavee Point also took the decision to use our links with other Community Development organisations to lobby on Traveller issues from a more general perspective. Through these links we were able to ensure that Traveller issues featured as part of the Social Partnership process.

Social Partnership was established in 1987, as a way for the State, employers and Trade Unions, to negotiate pay agreements and avoid strikes and economic disruption. Pavee Point helped establish the Community Platform to lobby for the community sector to be directly involved in Social Partnership. In 1997 a Community and Voluntary Pillar was added to this Partnership and we were, through the Com-



May 1993, Catherine Joyce marching for Traveller sites



December 2009, Fundamental Rights Agency Director Morten Kjaerum

munity Platform, very active in the work of this Pillar.

Although not involved in wage bargaining the Community/Voluntary Pillar was involved in general policy discussion. Subsequent agreements included the Programme for Competitiveness and Work (1994-1996) Partnership 2000 (1997-2000), the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (2000- 2003) and Sustaining Progress (2003-2005) Towards 2016 (2006-2015) before collapsing with the advent of the economic crisis. We succeeded in getting outcomes for the Traveller sector through these national agreements.

As well as political engagement – developing our own policies was key to lobbying and



advocacy. Central to this was having evidence to support our policies and so, the ability to carry out research.

Despite Pavee Point not having dedicated finance, resources or staff to engage in research and policy development, this aspect of our work was always planned for and always viewed as part of a multifaceted approach in promoting Traveller issues.

Occasionally funding was secured to carry out key pieces of research which could feed into policy development. This strategy has served well in highlighting particular issues for Travellers and in providing reliable data which gives added credence and gravitas to many of these issues.

One of the first pieces of research carried out by Pavee Point was a study of the Traveller accommodation situation in 'Dublin – No Place to Go'. This highlighted the dire living conditions of Travellers and the lack of water and sewage facilities.

Pavee Point, was and continues to be, one of the main sources of information on Irish Travellers and Roma. We have commissioned or co-commissioned over a 100 pieces of research into Traveller and Roma issues. Each study contributes to a deeper understanding of their situation and it is crucial that Travellers and Roma inform the research.

We have also made approximately 500 written submissions to Government on issues affecting Travellers which have served, in their consistency and analysis, in progressing Traveller issues.

We have also worked hard to persuade the Government of the importance of reliable data and have promoted data collection on ethnic groups within an equality framework.

Direct action is another important aspect to our lobbying and advocacy work. From the very early days, Pavee Point got out into the street to demonstrate our support or opposition on important issues. One of our first demonstrations was in support of Dunnes Stores Workers who, in 1984, refused to handle South African goods in protest at apartheid in South Africa and found themselves suspended from their jobs. A subse-



May 2002, Protesting against Trespass Act

quent strike lasted for two years.

Since then we have been forced into the streets on numerous occasions to protest against anti-Traveller racism among public representatives; Castle Street a centralised segregated supplementary welfare service for Travellers in Dublin; Government failure on Traveller accommodation; racist articles in the media; the introduction of Trespass legislation; the erection of a Barrier blocking access to Traveller sites in Dunsink; the threats to cutting the Community Development Programme are just a few examples.

Recent austerity measures also have serious implications for lobbying and advocacy in terms of Travellers. As well as losing two agencies concerned with equality and rights – Combat Poverty and the National Consultative Com-



March 2011, Rev. Jessie Jackson visits Pavee Point



December 2008, Traveller Focus Week



December 1995, UN Human Rights Day, Dublin

mittee on Racism and Interculturalism - the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission have been merged.

Another effect of austerity is the side-tracking of Traveller-specific measures in favour of more general intercultural initiatives. In the last 30 years we have moved from a situation where Travellers were not consulted with or named in Government policies to a situation where Travellers are now specifically named or specifically consulted within Government policies. Now the Government has opted to streamline everything into one 'intercultural' element. This has happened while the Government has so far refused to recognise Irish Travellers as a minority ethnic group. It is our experience that unless Travellers and Roma are named in policies – Travellers and Roma will be ignored.



June 1996, Michael Noonan, Minister for Health launching PHC Report





June 2012



May 1998



February 2003



October 2005



December 1997



April 2015

### People in Pavee Point

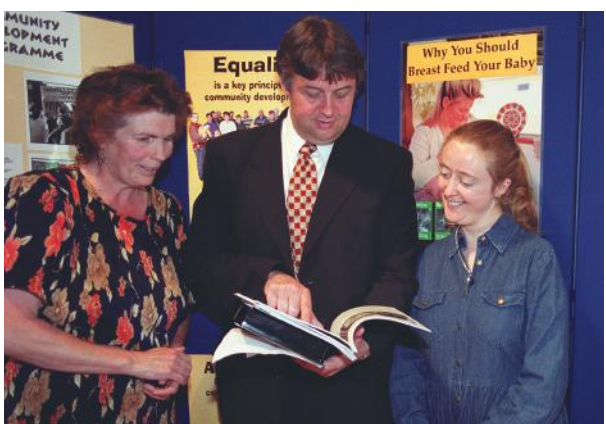
Visitors to Pavee Point over the years have included Vincent Browne, Brian Cowen, John O'Donoghue, Mary Harney, Micheál Martin, Kathleen Lynch, Michael Noonan, Tony Gregory and Mick Rafferty, Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Eamon Ó Cuív, Eoin Ryan, Aodhán Ó Riordáin, Christy Moore and Liam Ó Maonlaí



June 1999



May 2011



June 2000



June 2006



December 2012



June 1999



June 1996





December 2006, James Collins greets artists Louis Le Brocquy and Anne Madden at the National Gallery for the launch of the Pavee Point 2007 calendar which reproduced Le Brocquy's 'Tinkers' series of paintings from the 1940s. A Le Brocquy tapestry was also used as a poster for Traveller Focus Week 2006



# Traveller Infrastructure

**Back in the 1980s there was no organised community development Traveller movement. While many Travellers felt the injustice of their situation and attempts had been made to organise – the precariousness of Traveller existence made it difficult to organise a sustained movement.**

With the engagement of community workers, and the advantages they bring, it has been possible in 30 years to totally transform the way Travellers engage. A Traveller infrastructure has been created whereby Traveller organisations work with a united aim – to achieve human rights and full participation in society for Irish Travellers.

To maximise our work on human rights for Travellers we saw it as essential to have a range of Traveller organisations that can operate at a variety of levels.

Pavee Point was originally set up as a Dublin-based organisation (DTEDG). Having a local structure is essential to building an infrastructure with a sound foundation. To facilitate this, it has always been important to us to work in a way that provides a model that can be replicated by local organisations.

We have played an important role in the establishment and flourishing of Traveller organisations around the country – all based on the principles of community development and the understanding that Travellers are a minor-



December 1998, At the National Traveller Women's Forum in Dublin

Castle, from left, Mary Holland, Rosaleen McDonagh, Nancy Collins and Brigid Quirke





April 2010, Minceirs Whiden, Dublin

ity ethnic group that experiences racism and discrimination.

In 1988, we helped to set up the National Traveller Women's Forum to ensure that issues of gender equality within and outside the Traveller community do not get side-tracked.

In 1990 we ensured there was also an umbrella organisation to represent local groups at a national level and the Irish Traveller Movement now has a membership of Traveller groups from all around the country. In 2008 we supported the establishment of the Traveller only forum Mincéirs Whiden.

Pavee Point itself became a national organisation in 1990 with the objective of leading the way in research and analysis, policy development and project innovation as well as continuing our direct work with Travellers in North Dublin.

Early on in our history we began to get information and make contacts with Roma groups and other minority ethnic groups in Europe. In 1990, two Travellers attended the World Romani Congress in Warsaw, Poland. This type of contact has enabled a sharing of strategies and tactics and also highlights, to Travellers and others, that institutional racism exists at an international level.

It is when people realise that what is happen-



June 1989, Traveller Pilgrimage, Maynooth

ing to Travellers in Ireland is also happening to Travellers in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, or Cigana in Portugal, Gitano in Spain, Sinti in Germany & Italy, Tziganes in Greece and Gens de Voyage in France, and to Roma throughout central and Eastern Europe and others - they realise that it is not accidental and there is a reason for this.

As racism and discrimination against minority ethnic groups exists outside of the country it is unlikely to be resolved at a national level alone. So we decided to also advocate for Travellers rights internationally, rather than just in Ireland. In this way Traveller rights issues were brought into the current dialogue on international human rights.

In 1998 through the Irish National Committee for the European Year Against Racism, Pavee Point organised a transnational working seminar in Leuven, Belgium on the specific form

of racism experienced by Roma, Gypsies and Travellers. Pavee Point represented the Traveller experience and was able to have racism and discrimination against Travellers recognised at this level.

The Council of Europe created the first multilateral human rights instrument devoted to the protection of national minorities which Ireland signed up to in 1995, ratified and came into force in 1999.

Pavee Point has hosted Council of Europe delegates on many occasions in their monitoring of this Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. By working with the Council we have been able to raise our concerns about Travellers' human rights and also progress the situation on Traveller ethnicity.

Our engagement with the United Nations has also proved important. For example, in 2004, we submitted a Shadow Report to the United



December 1998, Minister Mary O'Rourke at National Traveller Womens Forum



December 2009, UN Human Rights Day, Dublin

Nations on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The Irish government had already sent a report of its own that included the fact that it would not acknowledge Travellers as a minority ethnic group.

Pavee Point contested the Irish Government's refusal to recognise Travellers as an ethnic





July 2002, Rosaleen McDonagh at Seanad Count Trinity College Dublin

group. In our report, we described the government's actions as closed-minded and reprehensible - and not without negative ramifications for settled-Traveller relations. In 2005 and 2011, Pavee Point was represented in CERD's hearing on Ireland.

Also in 2004, the European Roma and Traveller Forum was formed after 10 years of careful deliberation. Pavee Point is a founding member of the forum, and is represented by Martin Collins and, along with two other delegates, forms the official voice for the Irish Travellers at a European level.

Over the years we successfully sourced EU Community Initiative funding to develop work with Traveller women (NOW), Conflict Resolution (Horizon), Data Collection (Integra) and Anti-Discrimination. The Traveller and Roma Action for Implementation of Legal and Equality Rights (TRAILER) Project was formed by five countries to aid in the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation.

However, in recent years we have seen local Traveller structures come under severe pressure from Government.

In an attempt to save money, the previous coalition Government, put the ethos and the



November 2014, Pavee Point Primary Health Care Programme receiving Traveller Pride Award

very existence of these projects at risk. Traveller Community Development Projects suffered massive cuts but also moves were afoot to transfer management to local authorities. There was a further possibility that private companies could then be hired by local authorities to oversee the Traveller CDPs.

Given local authorities' failure to deliver on Traveller issues over the years plus the lack of understanding for the principles of Community Development among local management companies – these moves would, we believe, have finished off Traveller Community Development Projects.

It is only through solidarity and strenuous

lobbying that Traveller organisations, with the support of key civil servants at national level, have been able to stave off destruction at local level with the setting up of the National Traveller Partnership.

To maintain a healthy Traveller infrastructure we see there are challenges ahead in terms of funding and also in terms of keeping Traveller organisations independent.

"I went over to Europe. It was a challenge. But I got loads of information and I was able to give my own point of view as a Traveller. Those experiences are very good for yourself and you can bring information back," Kathleen Lawrence.



December 2010, Minceirs Whiden, Dublin



June 2006, Protest against Traveller evictions

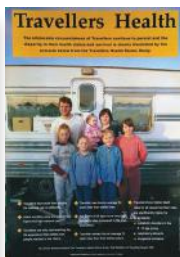


December 2006, Dunsink exhibition, Traveller Focus Week



May 2013, Grattan Puxton and Martin Collins





February 1995, Catherine Joyce in her caravan with her daughters during a photoshoot for a series of Traveller health posters



# Solidarity and Partnership

**Pavee Point is a partnership organisation – an organisation of settled and Traveller people working together to achieve human rights for Irish Travellers. This idea of partnership is central to the organisation.**

We recognise that the racism that Travellers and Roma experience is caused by the majority population and therefore the majority population have a role in challenging racism in society. Irish Travellers represent 1% of the population and as such, need the support of the settled community to progress Traveller issues. Engaging with the settled community is necessary at local authority and national governmental levels.

So, the larger the support for Traveller issues in the settled community – the larger the support for Traveller issues overall. After all human rights for Travellers is an issue that affects us all.

Settled people and Travellers working together in Pavee Point is essential to good internal management and avoiding the pitfalls of over-intense internal politics. Having an organisation that involves settled people working in partnership with Travellers can help address internal dynamics of the Traveller community which does not always allow for Travellers to challenge other Travellers.

Building on these principles of partnership and solidarity we have, since day one, striven to create links and alliances with like-minded organisations. Our first reaction was to promote



September 2009, Travellers from Pavee Point and other Traveller

organisations from around Ireland protest against cuts to the Community Development Programme





June 1988, Launch of Pavee Point Building Fund



August 2013, Kathy Lawrence addressing Martin Luther King commemoration



March 2011, Jessie Jackson International day against racism



June 2012, John Joe Nevin and Olympic medal



June 2012, John Collins and Jedward, Olympic torch bearers

Traveller issues as part of Community Work in general. We worked to embed a consciousness of Traveller issues in Community Development Projects around the country and also at a strategic and policy level via the Community Workers Co-Operative (CWC).

The CWC works to promote best practice in community work in Ireland and to promote quality community work in national policy. It also provides analysis on existing, new and emerging issues.

We also mobilised to have Traveller issues clearly situated within an anti-racist framework and, before we had such a diverse Ireland, built an understanding of racism as an Irish issue which Travellers experienced. We were a founder member of the Platform Against Racism, which subsequently disbanded when National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism was established. Since our foundation we have built relations with Amnesty International, the European Network Against Racism, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and others.

We also work with other equality organisations such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Federation, the Women's Council of Ireland, National Youth Council of Ireland, Age Action, Family Rights groups, disability groups and others.

Solidarity can take many forms. We often facilitate other groups to use our meeting facilities



January 2006, Sports Against Racism in Ireland, Soccer tournament, Dalymount Park



June 2012, Traveller Pride Week, outside the Mansion House



June 2008, Jack O'Connor SIPTU, at launch of Pavee Point Annual Report





June 1987, Pavee Point representing PLO at model UN General Assembly



January 1989, CWC structural fund campaign



October 1999, Aboriginal visitors to Pavee Point



April 2005, visit by Columbian delegation



December 2006, Philip Watt, NCCRI



March 2005 Cultural Expression Conference



January 2006, Inez McCormack

at Pavee Point. We also attend conferences and meetings organised by other organisations. We promote other equality issues via our website or e-newsletter and other publications.

We also support many campaigns around particular issues and recently campaigned for a 'yes' vote in the Marriage Equality Referendum as well as Children's Rights Referendum.

We also include other minority groups when we make submissions on various policy issues and when taking part in discussions on Government committees or when lobbying opposition politicians.

As members of the Community Platform we were involved in national partnership negotiations. This brought us to the heart of Irish political life at the time. Fantastic solidarity between the 26 national organisations that made up the Community Platform ensured that equality, social inclusion and anti-poverty issues were promoted.

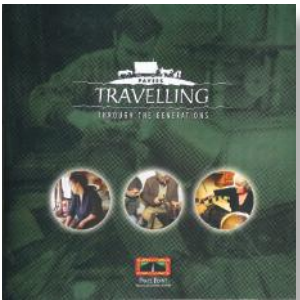
We also work in partnership with Government bodies and are very willing to engage in a positive way. This has been vital in ensuring that Traveller issues are promoted regardless of the political parties in power at any given time.

'Settled people in Pavee Point have stuck through all the challenges with the Travellers', Nancy Collins.





September 2013, 'Travelling Through the Generations', a showcase dealing with the life of Irish Travellers launched by Micheal Ó Muircheartaigh in the European Commission Offices, Dublin, as part of the EU Year for Intergenerational Solidarity. Paper flower making (background) is a traditional craft passed down through generations of Traveller women







June 2006



April 2006



April 2006



October 1995



October 1995



April 1993

## Pavee Point People



November 2011



March 2004



November 2013



December 2009



May 2015



November 2011



June 2012



September 2002



February 2000



September 2002



November 1997



June 2004



September 1999



January 2011



# Pavee Point Publications 1985-2015

A range of resources are available through our website [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie)





