

Irish Traveller Movement in Britain Pavee Céilidh - 26th and 27th June

Event Report

June was **Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month**. To mark this momentous occasion the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB) hosted a special two day symposium; '**Pavee Céilidh**' to celebrate the richness and diversity of Irish Traveller history and culture at the Hammersmith Irish Cultural Centre, London.

'Meet Your Neighbours: Irish Traveller Role Models Speak Out'.

200 plus people were there for day one, Travellers came from as far as Liverpool and Birmingham. The DVD 'Meet Your Neighbours: Irish Traveller Role Models Speak Out' was launched. **David Cooney the Irish Ambassador** officially launched the DVD. He said the DVD, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and produced by the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, shows that Travellers are performing a range of valuable community roles as community and youth workers, school governors, classroom assistants and councillors. He felt it is time that the wider community were aware of the valuable work that Travellers are doing.



Shane McDonagh the host of the event greets the Irish Ambassador David Cooney

Julie Morgan MP chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Traveller Law Reform also attended the launch and said that increasingly Travellers are coming forward to speak for their community. She noted that we now have Traveller councillors and teachers and in the future she expected there to be Travellers sitting as elected politicians in parliament.

Helena Kiely, Irish Traveller, who produced the DVD for the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, said that she hoped the film would help people understand Irish

Travellers. **Breda Doran**, one of the Travellers profiled in the film said she hoped it would help the wider community understand that Irish Travellers are their neighbours and should be made to feel part of the community.



The Irish Ambassador with Helena Kiely and Breda Doran



Julie Morgan MP and Andy Slaughter MP with the Irish Ambassador

Around the Campfire

Children from the Traveller and non Traveller community sat around a Traveller campfire and bender tent and heard from members of the Irish Traveller (**Bridget McCarthy**), Romany Gypsy (**Ann Emslie**) and Roma communities (**Janna Elliot**) about what it meant to be a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller.

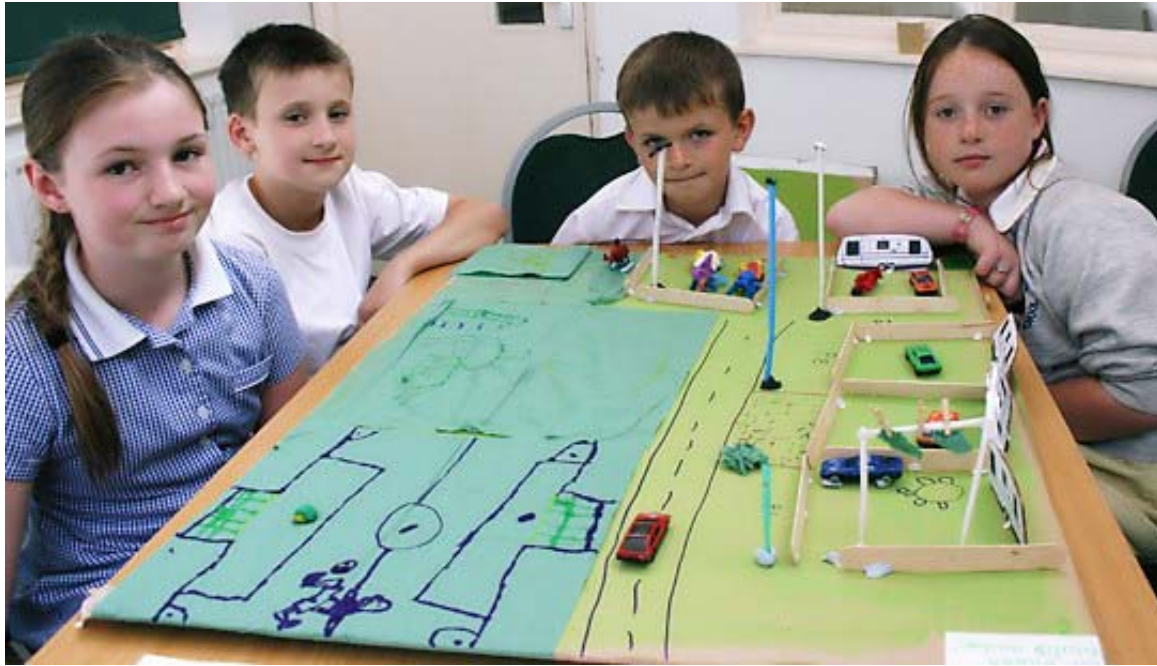


Former MP Kevin McNamara and Travellers **Richard Sheridan** and **Patrick McCarthy** together with **Sean Risdale** of the Equality and Human Rights Commission discussed the history of Travellers and how persecution and hardship had helped shape Traveller identity.



Kevin McNamara with Helena Kiely, Patrick McCarthy and Sean Risdale
Perfect Pitch

A group of young Travellers assisted by **Jenny Daly** (ITMB) and **Michael Ridge** (Haringey Travelling People's Team) and **Trevor Diesch** (Communities and Local Government) designed the perfect Traveller site and produced some great designs.



Some young people display their site designs



Trevor Diesch of Communities and Local Governments helps young people design a site. Trevor also assessed the designs and gave feedback.

Flower Making

Rose McCarthy and Mary Doran and other members of the Traveller community demonstrated a traditional Traveller craft and made flowers out of paper.



Rose McCarthy hands a flower to a guest



Flower making



Southwark Travellers' Action Group Stall



Some guests from Liverpool

Entertainment

Rising Traveller music star Bridget Corcoran entertained the audience of 200 plus with dancing and country and western songs.



'Into the Future' Where Next for Irish Travellers

On day two the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain held its conference '**Into the Future**' which sought to ask what might happen to Irish Travellers in the future and to assess what changes would be needed to help end the exclusion and racism from which Travellers suffer. Amongst the speakers were Kevin McNamara, Helena Kiely, Breda Doran, Lord Alf Dubs and Andy Slaughter MP.

At the end of the conference Yvonne MacNamara Director of the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain thanked all the people who had worked hard to make Pavee

Céilidh the great success that it was and promised that next year it would be even bigger and greater.

Thanks - The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain would like to thank the funders for Pavee Céilidh – The Ministry of Justice – The Department for Children, Schools and Families – The Travellers' Aid Trust – Brent Council – Lewisham Council – Innisfree Housing Association. We would also like to thank all the organisations and individuals who made the event a great success.