



Irish Traveller Movement in Britain

The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA

Telephone: 020 7607 2002

Wheels in Motion

Issue 6, November 2011

www.irishtraveller.org.uk

Highlights in this issue

- **Policy
Corner**
- **Capacity
building**
- **Operations
Team**
- **Community
Corner**
- **Notice
Board**

Director's Welcome

As we move further into the autumn, weeks away from Christmas Dale Farm continues to play heavy on all our minds as the Traveller community are continuously forced to ride an emotional rollercoaster of uncertainty. ITMB continue to work with the residents, legal team and other stakeholder groups to support the campaign and fight for justice. Since September 19th which was Basildon Councils designated eviction day, the Dale Farm residents with a little help from some friends have managed to battle the might of Basildon Council. (See *inside* for more details)

During August ITMB travelled to Geneva as part of the UK NGO delegation to present our Shadow report to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to the UN committee. We were delighted to be able to afford Richard Sheridan one of Dale Farm residents the opportunity to accompany us and meet with the committee. The full report can be downloaded from our website www.irishtraveller.org.uk. Following this meeting the United Nations published its concluding observations on the UK Government's record on race equality. Two of the major areas of concern raised in the Commission's report are, the drastic inequalities and discrimination faced by Roma, Gypsies and Irish Travellers across the UK and the disproportionate use of stop and search powers, particularly against young men from ethnic minorities. The UN committee also issued a strong statement in support of the residents of Dale Farm;



The full statement can be accessed at

www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/statements/DaleFarm Statement.pdf

Another battle we have found ourselves taking on is trying to ensure the UK government actually produces a national Roma Integration Strategy as directed by the European Commission.

To date there has been little to no consultation with the various GRT stakeholder groups or NGOs. Over the coming months we will endeavour to challenge this lack of inclusion and ensure full consultation and progress on this important national strategy. We have a specific webpage on our website which will keep you all updated.

The summer saw us pull together our work plan for moving forward with the recommendations from our research project Roads to Success. To this end we have recently secured a position within the Ethnic Minority Advisory Forum to the Department of Work and Pensions. This work is still in the very early stages. Please keep an eye on our website for updates.

Our Health & Wellbeing Project is in full swing and progressing well. We are now moving closer to the launch of our on line Traveller DV forum. This project is being lead by a steering Traveller women and professional experts.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Michael Hargreaves who has now formally joined the staff team as Planning and Accommodation Officer. Michael's expertise will be a tremendous asset to the work of ITMB. I also like to extend that welcome Sophie Vale who joins us as a Community Intern and will be working with both the policy and capacity building team.

Policy Corner

Dale Farm Eviction Update

Sadly October saw the commencement of enforcement action at Dale Farm Travellers site following a month of legal wrangling in the High Court. On Wednesday 19th October riot police conducted an early morning raid on the site which saw violent clashes between police and protestors including the use of tasers and batons by officers. ITMB have submitted complaints to Essex Police and the Police Complaints Commission regarding the use of force

on Dale Farm and in particular the use of tasers and batons which left one resident with a fractured spine and leg and back injuries.

ITMB have long been involved in the policy campaign to save Dale Farm. In April we led a Parliamentary delegation including Lord Avebury and Andy Slaughter MP to visit Dale Farm and drafted a report for its members to promote greater understanding in Parliament of the issue. In August ITMB and Dale Farm resident Richard

Sheridan made presentations to the UN CERD Committee in Geneva and secured a statement from the Committee calling on the UK government to suspend the planned eviction. The same month ITMB and Dale Farm residents submitted a petition to the Prime Minister at Downing Street calling upon him to stop the planned eviction and support a peaceful solution.



The petition was followed by a letter to the Prime Minister and Eric Pickles MP signed by 65 MP's, Peers and third sector organisations including the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (APPG), the Children's Society and Liberty. We have also been working closely with the APPG lobbying members of Parliament and government ministers.



More recently ITMB have been involved in the intense legal process supporting solicitors gathering evidence for the

three judicial reviews brought before Justice Ouseley. Unfortunately the three applications for judicial review failed and a subsequent appeal was dismissed. However in a separate case, the tireless work of the Gypsy Council and barrister Marc Willers proved that a large number of Basildon Councils enforcement notices were unlawful, resulting in significant limitations on the scale and scope of the eviction. The ruling by Justice Edwards Stuart has resulted in five plots being saved from eviction with the resident having the right to continued residential use. All gates, walls and fences cannot be removed and the hardstanding on six plots and on a large section of the site called Beauty Drive will remain. Judge Edwards-Stewart also ruled that Basildon should pay the Dale Farm residents a third of their costs.

ITMB would like to express our great sadness and disappointment that a peaceful and long term solution was not found for Dale Farm. We continue to work with residents and Dale Farm representatives to support them as best we can during these trying times.

ITMB Gypsy and Traveller report and UN mission to Geneva

A delegation from ITMB and Dale Farm travelled to Geneva in August to give evidence to the UN on the racism and discrimination Gypsies and Travellers face in the UK. The mission was part of a coalition of charities named *UK NGO's against Racism*.

ITMB wrote and submitted a detailed shadow report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial

Discrimination. The report highlighted the key areas where Gypsies and Travellers face discrimination and the key policies that need to be introduced to bring about positive change in line with the UN Convention.

ITMB made two presentations to the Committee, the first focusing on the broad discrimination Gypsies and Travellers continue to face across the UK, the second updating the Committee on the crisis at Dale Farm and appealing for support.



Following the UK's examination the Committee released its concluding observations summarising the key issues the government needs to address to prevent racial discrimination in the UK. Included in the UN's concluding observations are a number of paragraphs focusing specifically on Gypsies and Travellers and Dale Farm. These recommendations are a very useful means by which to hold the government to account and lobby ministers on issues such as accommodation, education and health.

New draft planning guidance on Gypsies and Travellers

ITMB continues to work in coalition with other Gypsy and Traveller organisations responding to the governments emerging planning guidance on Gypsy and Traveller sites. Serious questions continue to remain over what ITMB and others consider highly flawed draft guidance; one such question is how the government plan to change the guidance to make it compatible with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

ITMB - in coalition with other Gypsy and Traveller organisations - have written numerous letters to Communities Minister Bob Neill and more recently submitted a detailed briefing to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. We hope to have our concerns and recommendations addressed over the coming months as we push for a ministerial meeting and continue lobbying and campaigning on the issue.

Planning Specialist Michael Hargreaves joins ITMB

Getting planning permission for sites is a major problem for Travellers. So many families have had planning permission refused, had to fight enforcement notices, or been evicted from their own land. Without a stable place to live it's harder to get children into school or register with banks, doctors etc. ITMB's ability to help families with planning problems has been increased with planning expert Michael Hargreaves joining us to work two days a week.

Michael's background is as a town planner with Councils in Wales, London and Cambridgeshire. He was then a Civil Servant working on national and regional planning and transport policy. Through working for the previous Government he got involved in planning for Gypsies and Travellers. He produced the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people regional strategy for the East of England, one of only two completed before Eric Pickles started to abolish regional strategies.

Since being made redundant from the civil service early in 2011 Michael has been working as a volunteer for ITMB. He's also been setting up his own business as a planning adviser, helping families put in planning applications and fighting appeals and enforcement notices.

The focus of Michael work with ITMB will be:

- Working across Gypsy and Traveller organisations to challenge Government policy on planning and site provision;
- Working with Traveller organisations and communities to help them understand the planning system and how to get better outcomes from it;
- Provide limited pro bono advice, on behalf of ITMB to families on planning problem. ITMB won't have time to do all the work, but will suggest ideas on what to do next, where to go for advice.
- The project is also hoping to offer an internship to a young Traveller who wishes to learn about planning and how to get a better deal for Gypsies and Travellers.

For more information contact policy@irishtraveller.org.uk

Education, Health and Economic Inclusion

In June ITMB supported and coordinated a meeting on the future of Traveller education between schools Minister Nick Gibb, Baroness Janet Whitaker, Lord Tim Boswell and George Howarth MP. The meeting was also attended by a number of Gypsy and Traveller representatives with expertise in education, including ITMB Trustee and education consultant Brian Foster.

Following the meeting Nick Gibb asked for the Gypsy Traveller delegation to prepare a paper highlighting the key areas where Gypsy, Roma and Traveller education might be improved. In consultation with the other members of the delegation, ITMB trustee Brian Foster wrote the paper which was submitted by Baroness Whitaker in early October. The paper focused on the use of virtual schools, detailed monitoring of the pupil premium and more detailed guidance on initiatives for 'vulnerable children' amongst other things to enhance Gypsy, Roma and Traveller education outcomes.

ITMB are also presently working on a Gypsy and Traveller health briefing collating the most recent and detailed evidence and research available to give an up to date picture of the state of the communities health. The briefing will be used to lobby government and inform members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies Roma and Travellers and hopefully result in a ministerial meeting in the coming months.

On 18th October ITMB attended a meeting of the Department for Works and Pensions Ethnic Minority Advisory Group (EMAG). ITMB have for a long

time lobbied the DWP for Gypsy and Traveller representation on EMAG and for Gypsies and Travellers to be classified as an ethnic minority group in the DWP. ITMB welcome the department's decision to have Gypsy and Traveller representation on EMAG, however the department still don't include Gypsies and Travellers as an ethnic minority group. ITMB will continue to lobby and pressurise the DWP to change this classification and ensure Gypsies and Travellers are fully acknowledged and included in the future.

Capacity Building

ITMB and the health project participants are now half way through their second and third modules for the Health and Wellbeing course and are up to their eyes in course work!

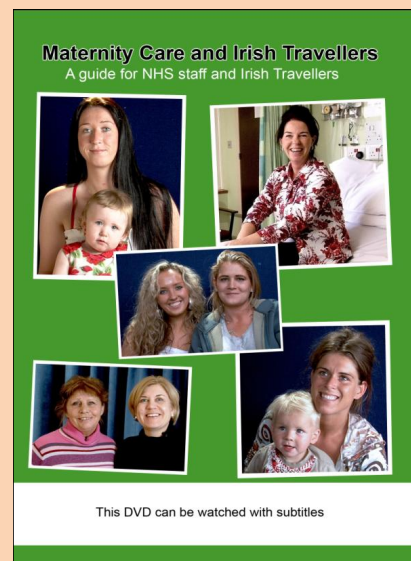
They have been enjoying hearing from professionals from various health bodies who come into the weekly session and one of the first people to come to speak to them was Janet Fyle. Janet is a registered midwife and the Professional Policy Adviser at the Royal College of Midwives(RCM). Her role involves providing midwifery advice to the RCM and their midwife members, and looking at how local and national policies affect women, their families and midwives.

She has lots of experience working with Irish Travellers and it turned out she'd even delivered one of the babies of one of the participants!



Janet chatted to the group and presented and discussed lots of different issues surrounding Maternity.

As a fan of technology Janet utilised her iPad to show the class some videos. She agreed that the award winning Irish Travellers and Maternity Care DVD was the ideal tool for helping both professionals and members of the community to learn the important lessons about maternal health care.



Human Rights Film Festival

On a blustery October evening, Advisory Group member Bridget McCarthy and ITMB Capacity Development Officer ventured West from the capital to attend

the West Midlands Human Rights Film Festival. It was held in the theatre of the Birmingham Central Library. On the finale evening of month long festival and to an audience of 50, *Pavee Ceilidh* played and received a rapturous applause. One of the viewers described it's a 'Very thought provoking'.

The screening was followed by a short presentation citing the history and role of the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and the current place of Travelling communities in a diverse Britain. It was praised particularly by one of the audience - '*Presentation done very well, interesting insight into their way of life and the issues they face*'



The scheduled 10 minute question and answer session had to be extended to over 20 minutes as the audience has questions coming thick and fast. Bridget was a consummate professional and answered all questions with authority and was given a standing ovation at the end. The evening was enjoyed by all and ITMB made some great contacts in the region and there were several expressions of partnership work. As

always with ITMB, it's the Advisory group who are leading the way for ITMB in terms of policy and direction and their influence is shown in the wider community. Congratulations to all who were involved in the making of *Pavee Ceilidh*.

The Regional Traveller Support Network (RTSN)

The RTSN met October 5th. This was once again an opportunity for support workers, workers for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to share information and discuss relevant issues at a policy and practice level. As well as borough updates on the impact of cuts, there were also a couple of presentations. The first of these was by Debbie Dixon from Action 4 Advocacy which highlighted the potential and importance of developing advocacy skills as a way of raising the profile of the social exclusion experienced by GRT communities.

In addition Amanda Martins, support worker with Sutton Affinity Housing Association spoke about how support services in Bromley are adapting to top down changes. She also spoke about the very successful HELP card project which she set up. The card indicates that someone has poor reading and writing skills, service users can present the card to front line staff or receptionists to ask for discreet help.

Other matters discussed was consultation for reforms to funding disadvantaged pupils at school. Laura Greason of the Roma Support Group

outlined concerns with proposals that could exclude some Roma children.

Bernie O'Rourke, support worker with Solace Women's Aid spoke about launch of DVD on the realities of living in a hostel from a Traveller woman's perspective. The DVD will be launched November 4 and will be available at a cost of £10.

Next RTSN meeting Thursday 19th January, 2012 at 2pm.

ITMB recognising capacity needs within a number of frontline services have commissioned Action for Advocacy to deliver a training session to the frontline providers. All participants will receive a nationally recognised certificate from Action for Advocacy. There are a number of limited places available. If you would like to find out more about this training, please contact 020 7607 2002 or alternatively email info@irishtraveller.org.uk



The PQASSO Quality Mark is a nationally recognised award that offers users, as well as commissioners and funders, external verification of the quality and credibility of an organisation. Organisations that achieve the PQASSO Quality Mark at Levels 2 and 3 of PQASSO 3rd Edition will be able to use the Charity Commissions Charity Quality Standards Stamp confirming that they are accredited by standards that meet the Hallmarks of an effective charity.

ITMB were even informed at one point that we could possibly be the 100th organisation to receive the award. As it turned out, we were the 101st. Still an achievement by many standards.

Operations Team

PQASSO reaches ITMB

As you may remember from our last newsletter, we were in a position to tell you we had achieved Level 2 PQASSO Award. We have now progressed a little further and actually have the logo from the Charity Evaluation Service to use on our website and publicity. As well as having achieved this, we have also been given the Charity Commissions Endorsement Logo to use.

The new look ITMB Website

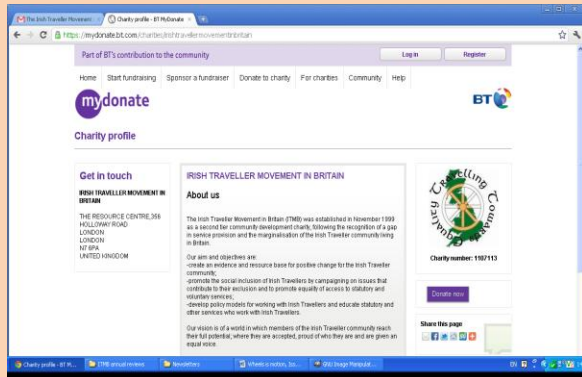
Over the past few months, the Operations Team have been working closely with the ITMB Team and our Web Designer to bring the website more up to date, easier to access and use, as well as informative.

This is obviously a working progress, based on the work which is being undertaken at ITMB, and the relevance to surrounding situations.

We have modernised the layout and the theme of the website, updated content and photos. We have also introduced the use of the Slider, photos on Flickr as well as the VodPod.

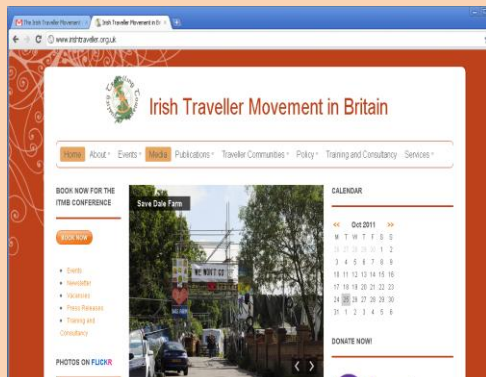
On our Funders page, you will clearly see listed the funders with their logos, with a direct link to their website next to them.

Two things in particular we are delighted to add to the site are the 'My Donate' button, and the new, electronic, safe way to book tickets for our Annual Conference.



The My Donate button allows you to donate money to the organisation from as little as £10.

The new electronic safe way to book your tickets for the Annual Conference is new this year. With the link on our website, you are directed to the e.tickets page where you can choose your workshop, and quantity of tickets. You are then moved onto the payments page, where you can pay through your PayPal account or alternatively with your Debit or Credit card as a PayPal guest. This is very new to the ITMB, but equally a success also!



The website has definitely taken shape, and continues to improve each day. Continuing on this line, you will notice over the next few weeks the layout becoming more consistent, as well as the content being updated.

We hope you enjoy the ITMB website experience!

Community Corner

A Gypsy's Tale – My Road to Education



I was 14 years old when I left school without any qualifications, I could read and write as I attended primary school and year 7 and 8 of secondary school. Nobody knew I was a Traveller at school as they never asked and I never told them. However I always felt an outsider and shy, I was bullied at primary

A year after leaving school my mum enrolled me in college on a Bridge to School course, where I made a couple of friends, and gained – a level 2 certificate in English and Maths, a Duke of Edinburgh award and a First Aid certificate. After my time at Croydon College, at the age of 17 I got a job as a Dental Nurse which I did not have any interest in, but felt I needed to have a sense of being and earn my own money, shortly after a few months of working there I left.

I always wanted to study law from a young age, it really intrigued and interest me, but I never thought someone like me, not from a posh middle class family could ever pursue such a career in the legal sector. However when my mum's sister went to London to University everybody was amazed -she had moved to London on her own, to pursue a career as a Psychologist. With this in mind and my aunt and mum always encouraging me to pursue my dreams, I enrolled at Bedfordshire University at the age of 19 with no qualifications for the course, just with bits and pieces I had picked up along the way.

I enrolled on the LLB Law degree course, and felt so proud to tell people I was at University studying law when they ask me what I did - enrolling on the course was nerve racking but my adrenalin kept me going at the same time.

The next four years was at times a real struggle for me, I met people in my class from privileged backgrounds, and people who had A* A levels, at times I would think what am I doing here, look at the competition there is and how clever these people are. Eventually holding my nerve and believing I could

get there I did. I graduated with a LLB Law Degree with HONS. When I met my mum dressed in my robes and cap she cried her eyes out and she was bursting with pride, seeing her and my little boys face made it all worth it.

After my graduation, every job I went for I was turned down 90 per cent of the time without an explanation, which was really depressing after all the hard work I put in to studying. I wanted to be involved with Gypsy and Traveller law, or help Travellers who were having legal issues, but did not have the first idea or information on how to do this. Dale Farm was constantly in the media and after seeing Dispatches on Channel 4 - Gypsy Eviction, I felt I really wanted to get involved I had to help these people. I sent an email to the dale farm website, and it basically read, I have just completed my law degree and as a Gypsy myself, I feel I should be doing something to help, I got emailed back asking me to go to a meeting at Landmark chambers in London the following day.

I asked my mum what she thought and she said to go for it, I felt so nervous getting ready to go there I did not know what know what to expect . As I walked to the chambers I stood outside to call my mum as I felt so nervous and anxious walking in to somewhere I did not know and was not sure of. I walked in to the meeting and when it was my turn I introduced myself I said, I have completed my law degree and as a Traveller myself wanted to know if I could be of any help. I met with Yvonne MacNamara at the meeting and got to know and learn about the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and its work. I was initially offered a volunteering role working with the solicitors. After helping

with the ground work for the injunction ,Yvonne offered me a Intern placement within the ITMB, I was so happy to be asked to work there finally I found somewhere I can use my knowledge from my law degree, to work and help Travellers and Gypsy's, learning even more by working here.

In the future I would like to finally complete my dream of being a barrister, and specialise in Gypsy and Traveller law, I really want to make a stand for our culture, and I feel and know we are always misunderstood and miss treated, I want to be a part of helping the public understand us because at this current moment it is a vicious circle of poor communication, poor understanding and ignorance, between the pubic and Travellers, Instead of all the negative attention Travellers and Gypsy people are prone to, we need to shine a light on the positive aspects of our ever growing culture.



Hi to all

My name is Josephine O'Driscoll and I have been an intern with ITMB since June 2011. It has been a great experience for me and I have learned so much with my mentor, Grace O'Malley. My time with ITMB has encouraged me and given me the confidence to get involved in other projects in my local area such as becoming a Trustee with Ema Broxbourne (Ethnic minority

association) and get involved with NHS on equality and access to services within the NHS for my community. This is an example of what we have been doing. I helped to organise a GRT History month event in June which was attended by around 100 people. We had an interesting presentation from community members on our history, Irish dancers, a roma band, and the Mayor and local press attended . It was a great event enjoyed by all. We had a meeting with Grace and Josie from the Irish Traveller movement today and identified the following actions that you may be able to help us with:

- Raise awareness of services offered from the West Herts medical Centre among the Traveller community
- Look at the current publicity about the medical centre and discuss ways that this may be a bit more user friendly
- Explore opportunities for some cultural awareness training for staff

We are doing a health and advocacy course, having fun and learning at the same time, as well as having the chance to meet up with other community members.

I have also been on a trip to the EP in Brussels which was funded by ITMB and to the East of England office and listened to a very interesting presentation on funding that could be obtained from Europe.

I have been to an inter agency meeting in Greenwich with ITMB's Jenny Daly, the Partnership Co-ordinator, which was attended by a lot of organisations. We hope this will grow over time and get things done in Greenwich for the Travelling Community.

I also attended the Oral Hearings on Planning in Communities and Local Government Offices with Matthew Brindley, ITMB Policy Officer, where we got to tell them what we thought of the planning system for Gypsies and Travellers. I think we did get some very valid points across.

We had a Communities Together event on 25th September where I had a stall to promote ITMB and GATE (Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment) Hertfordshire, which is a group that I have set up in my local area.

The aims of the group is to educate both the Travelling Communities and the wider community to live side by side in a diverse community.

GATE lives by the motto, 'Nothing about us, is without us and hopes to help all Travellers and Gypsies to have a say in the things that affect their lives. I am very thankful to all at ITMB for all the help and support they have given me, as I could not have got this far without them!

Notice Board

Interested in Volunteering?

If you are interested in volunteering, and would like to know more about what volunteering opportunities there are at ITMB, please email info@irishtravellers.org.uk

An Opportunity for a young Traveller to learn about planning

ITMB are offering a young Traveller the opportunity of internship work with Michael Hargreaves, and learn about planning and site development.

You need good written English, numeracy and computer skills, and a commitment to working for the Community. If you are interested or want to find out more, contact Yvonne Mac Namara, Director or Michael Hargreaves on 020 7607 2002

ITMB Annual Conference:

Watch out for details of the ITMB Annual Conference which will be taking place in November at The Resource Centre, Holloway Road.

Updates will be made to our website, www.irishtraveller.org.uk

Maternity Care and Irish Travellers

A guide for NHS staff and Irish Travellers



This DVD can be watched with subtitles

Available Now!!

Maternity Care and Irish Travellers DVD: A guide for NHS staff and Irish Travellers

If you would like a copy of this DVD, please contact info@irishtraveller.org.uk, or alternatively phone the office on 020 7607 2002.

Cost of DVD: £10.00

Have you got something you would like us to advertise for you? Land? Caravan? If there is something, please contact the office, and we can arrange for this advertisement for you in our next newsletter. The content is subject to acceptance.

If you would like to make any contributions to our next issue or simply to make a comment on this policy newsletter, please get in touch:

Editor: Sabrina M Fahy
sabrina@irishtraveller.org.uk

Thank you to all of our Funders from all at ITMB

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Irish Traveller Movement in Britain
The Resource Centre
356 Holloway Road
London, N7 6PA
020 7607 2002

ITMB Contacts:
info@irishtraveller.org.uk
media@irishtraveller.org.uk
policy@irishtraveller.org.uk

www.irishtraveller.org.uk

info@irishtraveller.org.uk

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