

The BARRIE NEWS

Dedicated to printing good news stories about Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland

TRAVELLERS SET UP CAMP IN PRESTIGIOUS ARTS VENUE



The Time Travellers installation gave the audience a lot to think about

USUALLY a newspaper headline like the one above is followed by a negative article, but not this one! Over 50 Gypsy/Travellers contributed towards an exciting installation at the Summerhall arts venue in October, as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival (SMHAFF).

Time Travellers saw a room transformed into a Traveller camp, complete with bough tent, campfire, washing line – and even a dog! Visitors were invited to enter the tent, which was lit by candles, and listen to recordings of Gypsy/Travellers talking about life on the road. Outside the tent, a tree was decorated

with old photographs and a wall was covered with memory boxes. Each box was decorated by a different Gypsy/Traveller and filled with reminders of happy times on the road.

The bough tent was expertly put together by Kathy McGuigan from Argyll, with the help of filmmaker and honorary MECOPP member, Peter Ross. It isn't every day you get asked to build a traditional camp in a room in an art gallery but Kathy was up for the challenge, "it was fun and different and I was proud of the end result. I actually felt dead proud 'cos it was in my mother's home town, a part of history,

and a compliment to her. Working with Peter was a pleasure, he's good at what he does and as good as any Traveller man that day". Speaking about putting the tent together, Peter said, "It was such an honour to work with Kathy on the tent and the highlight of my year last year".

Elsewhere in the exhibition, works were displayed by young photographer, Shannon MacDonald from Argyll, and renowned artist, Shamus McPhee from Pitlochry.

Over 1600 people visited the SMHAFF exhibition at Summerhall which ran throughout the month of October.

FREE SPRING 2017

MORE BARRIE NEWS FOR GYPSY/TRAVELLERS

OKAY, so we said *The Barrie News* was a one-off. Well, after printing over 500 copies, including copies sent as far afield as Trinidad, Canada and Australia, and repeated requests for the next edition, maybe it's time for *The Barrie News* No. 2!

Fed up reading negative stories about Gypsy/Travellers in the mainstream media - *The Barrie News* is a chance to share some of the more positive stories that just never seem to make it into the papers. Happy Reading!

SDS SUCCESS FOR ARGYLL TRAVELLER

A young Traveller woman in Argyll is now in receipt of Direct Payments from the council to help her get out and about.

Margaret MacDonald was born with cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. She now receives monthly payments from the council called Direct Payments to help her get around, take part in activities, and do things other people her age do.

Direct Payments are a form of Self-Directed Support, which all councils in Scotland offer. It means that people who need help have more control over the kind of support they get from their council.

Speaking about the Direct Payments, Margaret's mum, Mary, said: "It was a long drawn-out process and it wasn't easy at times. But now we've got the Direct Payments, they're making a huge difference to Margaret. It means she can now get out and about and do things that she's interested in".



TRAVELLER WOMAN SHOWS YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD FOR UNIVERSITY

MARGARET MCKENZIE from Perth proved you are never too old to go to university. At age 67, she took part in St Andrews University's Woven Communities Symposium, joining a distinguished list of attendees and sharing a thing or two about traditional basket-weaving in Scotland.

GRADUATION SUCCESS FOR YOUNG TRAVELLER



GEMMA PORTER was surrounded by a proud family at Dundee's Caird Hall in the summer when she graduated from Dundee University with a BA (Hons) in Nursing.

Gemma spent four years studying at the university and has now landed herself her dream job working at Perth Royal Infirmary.

RIDING THE WAVES!



KIARAN MacIntyre is 10 years old and recently joined the sea cadets in Oban. The sea cadets offer young people opportunities to learn new skills and to work in teams with a naval theme. He attends the group every Tuesday evening and learns many things like first aid, sea survival and knot-tying. Kiaran's dad, Iain, is a fisherman, originally from the Isle of Barra, so his family already have a connection with the sea. Kiaran loves his uniform and says he also wants to work at sea when he grows up.

TRAVELLERS SING-A-LONG ON LONDON TUBE!



A **GROUP** of four Gypsy/Travellers cheered up London Underground users by getting everyone to join in a rendition of *Everything's Gonna be Alright*. The group started singing along to a busker playing in Leicester Square tube station and soon got other Underground users singing along too! As one of the singers said, "it was when I seen the wee guy sitting playing the guitar, it just inspired me to sing along, whenever I hear Bob Marley I want to sing, and it was echoing right through the tunnels".

The group was in London attending the annual Traveller Movement conference and were on their way home when they got everyone singing.

ARTS & CULTURE



AUDACIOUS WOMEN WALK – AND WHEEL – ON FIRE!

TEN Gypsy/Traveller women took part in the first Audacious Women Festival by doing a fire-walk at Lendrick Lodge in Callander. The Audacious Women Festival called on women to break with convention and do something brave and daring during the month of February – so this group of audacious women decided they would walk on fire!

Before hitting the coals, the women were surprised with an unexpected challenge – to break an arrow in half using only their necks! This ritual was part of a workshop delivered by Lendrick Lodge's Stephen to prepare the women for the feat ahead.

When the coals had been prepared, our women took no time at all to get across the hot coals. This time it was Stephen who got the surprise, saying, "I've never seen anyone just go for it like that!" Each person walked over the coals several times, including Susan who wheeled over the coals in her wheelchair!

Having walked on fire and broken arrows with their necks, what will these audacious women do next?!

CARERS GET PAMPERED AT PERTH COLLEGE



A group of seven Gypsy/Travellers were left looking and feeling wonderful after a pampering session at Perth College. Students of beauty therapy gave the ladies a facial before they had a cut and blow dry by hairdressing students. The morning was topped off with a delicious lunch courtesy of catering students. Thank you Perth College!

CREATIVE BREAKS

OVER the last year we've organised several short breaks for carers and their loved ones, all thanks to funding from Shared Care Scotland. Over 87 adults have attended either a residential or Family Day, many attending more than one. In 2016 there were five residentials (Pitlochry, Perth, Glasgow, Aberfoyle and Callander and three Family Days). There have been so many lovely memories, plenty of relaxation, new friendships and great laughter.



Together:

we went swimming at midnight under a starlit sky – chose colours to match our moods with Julie – tossed the haggis at our very own ‘Highland Games’ – painted pictures, and lots of arty things, with Natalie – tried our hand at archery – tapped all over the place with Mairi – got our nails painted bright and bold – ‘performed’ in front of students at the Bield – sung songs with Sam and Jenese – concentrated hard to weave a 2 inch square with Samaira – learned how to play the uke with Finlay – we were spinning the decks with Turntable – built confidence with Priscilla – sooked old-fashioned sweets in Kingussie – literally ‘walked on fire’ and created sketches with Universal Comedy.

And, not forgetting, plenty of soothing massages from Jules, Kaia, Alison, Mhaire and Rosemary. But, have to say, Wendy’s description of her first ever massage stole the show at Gartmore – sorry cannot be re-printed in a family newspaper!

“I had a great sleep, my back feels relaxed. It was like having your own time, to yourself. A wee relaxation time. I was nervous about the firewalk but then I was psyched up and felt like I could jump out of a plane! It was great”

“Today I felt stronger, healthier too in my mind like, it gave me a real boost and everybody went for it. It was really good”

“There was no time to think about your worries. It’s something you enjoy doing so it takes your mind off things”

“Getting to meet other Travellers, even if I have never seen them before in my life, it was like I knew them all my life and they were my friends”

“I went in the water, I can’t swim but at least I went in, lessons next!”

“I really enjoyed the firewalk. I’m chuffed with myself for doing it. My family won’t believe it! I loved my massage and I went out like a light last night! It’s been so worthwhile coming and great to see everyone. A great, relaxing experience”

“I can talk to people like this [one to one] but not in front of people. Can’t believe I was actually doing that theatre thing [forum theatre] in front of people”

“The camp fire was the best, brought back so many memories, just like one big family”

“My daughter is shy, and her cousin is shy, and they don’t mix, not even with other Travellers, but she loved it. She was relaxed and opened up”

“... great seeing the young ones getting confidence”

“It was so different to what I expected, thought we’d just be on our own but I loved it. That was the first time I’ve ever been to a museum”

“... exhilarating for me and completely de-stressing, forgetting about everything else”

SAM SINGS FOR SPECIAL AUDIENCE



DURING the Celtic Connections Festival 2016 a group of Gypsy/Travellers, of all ages, braved the snowy conditions to hear Sam Lee, an award-winning folk singer, perform at The Tron in Glasgow. Sam has been collecting old Traveller songs from across the UK and Ireland and sang a familiar selection of tunes. 'Our' group were a lively bunch and, needless to say, some people had no hesitation in joining in! Although 'wee' Paul wasn't too keen on the dancing! Everyone met Sam after the gig and he happily chatted and signed autographs.

TRAVELLERS WIN AT DRAGON'S DEN-STYLE EVENT

TWO TRAVELLERS from Perth secured funding for two day trips for carers after presenting a bid at an event similar to BBC's *Dragon's Den* programme. Susan and Yvonne Townsley presented their bid for funding at the council's Carers' Participatory Budgeting event, which saw carers from across Perth and Kinross voting for which projects they think should be funded.

Susan and Yvonne gave a confident bid, asking for £1,400 to enable Gypsy/Traveller carers to go on day trips to areas of special significance to Gypsy/Travellers. Their bid impressed the audience who voted for the project to be awarded the funding.

Speaking about the experience, Yvonne said: "I was petrified standing up on that stage - there were so many people watching!



"I'm just glad we got the funding - it was all worth it in the end!"

The first trip in June was to the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore, where 17 Gypsy/Travellers strolled around the 1700s township and inspected the mock Travellers' camp. The group was also invited to the collections room, as can be seen in the photo above, where they were shown photographs and artefacts relating to Gypsy/

Travellers which are not usually on display, before grabbing some treats from the old-fashioned sweetie shop.

The second trip in September was to the Tinkers' Heart site in Argyll, the first Gypsy/Traveller place to be awarded national monument status. Five Gypsy/Travellers braved the driving wind and rain to make the long journey to the site overlooking Loch Fyne.

THE EYES HAVE IT



Mary at Summerhall.

TALENTED young artist, Shannon MacDonal, 17, from Argyll has exhibited her photography work, three years in a row, at the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival. Her latest exhibition was entitled, *Watching Time Go By*, a collection of close up photographs of eyes. Her subjects were family members of different ages including her three-year-old niece and mum and dad. Shannon got the idea for the exhibition because she enjoys taking close up photographs and has noticed that everyone in her family has similar eyes, no matter what age they were. She wanted people who viewed the exhibition to think about the eyes being the window to your soul.

Shannon said, "It was really cool for me to see my photographs so big, they had their own wall in the exhibition - it was super awesome! I was really pleased with how it all worked out." Adding that the latest exhibition was her favourite so far - "I knew exactly what I wanted to do and just took the shots and sent them off. In the past I'd had some help with developing my idea, but with this exhibition I just knew what I wanted to do." She can't wait until the 2017 Festival and is already thinking about what she wants to exhibit. Shannon went along to the launch of the exhibition at Summerhall in Edinburgh with her mum Mary, sister Margaret and niece Mary.

ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR SHAMUS!



SHAMUS MCPHEE from Pitlochry had yet another busy year, with a number of exciting projects on the go.

One of the highlights for Shamus, a community-based artist, was carrying out research for a Pictorial History of Gypsy/Travellers for IRISS (Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Sciences).

The project, which is still a work in progress, saw Shamus combining his passions for both history and art to produce evidence-based illustrations of defining moments in Gypsy/Traveller history.

Shamus also had some of his work on display at Summerhall in Edinburgh, as part of the collaborative *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* exhibition in October 2016.

As well as his art work, Shamus co-authored a report on Gypsy/Travellers, human rights and social work's role, with sister Roseanna acting as a community advisor. The report, published by IRISS, discusses issues faced by Gypsy/Travellers and the role that social work could play in making change happen.

Phew!

OSCARS – WATCH OUT! MECOPP NEWS



Student Nurses from the University of Dundee enjoying the performance and learning about the issues

OR ARE we going for Golden Globes this year? Yes, we had a few Oscar-winning performances last spring at the Forum Theatre workshops we held near Perth – and we have video evidence to prove it!!!

A whole bunch of folk enjoyed learning about forum theatre with theatre director Mark Traynor, we created three drama sketches based on real experiences some of the group had had with health and social care staff. The aim was to explore some of the challenges and barriers Gypsy/Travellers can often face in accessing health and social care – and, most importantly, how problems can be resolved.

Forum Theatre is a very involved style of theatre which gives people the opportunity to explore issues affecting them in a safe and welcoming environment.

As Caitlin, who ended up playing a very ‘nosy’ social worker, said at the time “most of the time I’d prefer just to sit out and watch but once you’ve had a little taste of it, you want to keep going”.

After practising our sketches, we then invited the ‘audience’, in this case second year student nurses from the University of Dundee to shout ‘stop’ when they wanted to take the place of one of the play’s characters and/or offer up

potential solutions to the problems encountered. Caitlin continued “I hope it will maybe open their eyes a bit when they are put into that situation”.

Feedback was really positive from the students and the actors and Dr Linda McSwiggan, senior lecturer at Dundee University School of Nursing and Health Sciences, said “we were pretty overwhelmed by how actively students engaged with the topic and by their willingness to share their views and experiences within the group”. We’re currently applying for some funding so we can do more ‘acting up’.



MANY of you will remember the old MECOPP office on Leith Walk – yes that plush, warm, smart, accessible, cosy (just kidding) office. Well we’ve finally moved ... to a bright and airy new office on The Shore in Leith. It’s much smaller but so far, so good, and at least the heating works!

In March 2016 there was a new MECOPP baby – Siubhan gave birth to a beautiful wee boy called Ossián. In Argyll, initially Amanda and then Gail did a brilliant job of ‘holding the fort’ during Siubhan’s maternity leave, and, amongst other things, taught us a thing or two about Dream-Catchers!

And in July, it was time to get the glad rags on as Lucy and Craig tied the knot in her parents’ gorgeous Angus garden.



Meanwhile, Natalie was lending a hand in Perth and Kinross and is now planning her a whole lot more travelling sometime soon.

Donna (centre), meanwhile, got her running shoes back on and completed the Edinburgh 5k



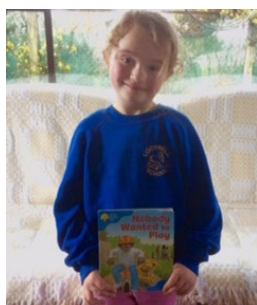
And as for Michelle ... well she didn’t get married, she didn’t have a baby and she most certainly did not run 5k! But she did do a fair bit of travelling and is still cooking up a storm!

KIARAN WINS TOP GAELIC PRIZE

KIARAN MacIntyre, from Dunbeg, Argyll, was recently awarded a top prize for his skills in Gaelic language and communication. He was awarded the Clan MacIntyre Trust Shield at the Taynuilt Highland Games. Each year at the Highland Games, the Clan MacIntyre Trust awards a shield and other prizes to pupils from the local school where teaching is through the medium of Gaelic. The awards mark effort and excellence in Gaelic language and

communication. Kieran attends the Gaelic primary school in Oban, his father is a fluent Gaelic speaker and his mum Charlene said “Kieran did so well to win the shield against competition from older children. He loves learning Gaelic and it’s great to know that the language is being preserved and passed on within our family. The Clan Trust were also delighted that a MacIntyre scooped the top prize”.

TOP OF THE CLASS!



MIRREN MacDonald is five-years-old and from Ledaig, near Oban. Mirren has just started Primary One at Lochnell Primary School in Benderloch. She says her favourite thing to do is reading and she gets the bus to and from school with her older brother James. There are 13 children in her class and her teacher is called Mrs Cameron. Mirren says that school is, “really good!”

TRAVELLERS TREATED LIKE ROYALTY!

WELL that makes a change you might say! Ten lucky Travellers got the chance to view the SPFL Championship game, Hibernian FC v Dundee United FC on Sunday 2nd October 2016 from a private box! Kindly donated to the Gypsy/Traveller Carers’ Project by Hibs via the GameChanger programme – a partnership to harness the power of football to help tackle inequalities and to promote social justice. Edith, one of those who attended with her daughter and granddaughters said

“it was really good but awfy hard work too with the babies. I know it was October but we were in this box and we were roasted. It was all glass, see wi’ the sun coming through the windaes it was like a furnace and we’d tae strip the wains down and of course we couldnae open a window!” After the match John, another one of the lucky footy fans said “it was magic, we had a ball” and then after a short pause “... I am actually a Rangers fan so if you can get tickets there next time that would be even better!!”

MOVING MINDS - on the move!

OVER the last year the ever-growing **Moving Minds** exhibition has been on display the length and breadth of Scotland, and even made it south of the Border too!

Last June the exhibition attracted over 9,000 visitors whilst at Highland Folk Museum (main photo), moving on to Inverness Museum and Art Gallery in July where there was a lively Conversation Panel - with Margaret, Patsy, John, Edith and Roseanna sharing experiences and answering questions from the public - admirably chaired by John Finnie MSP, a great supporter of our work, often 'behind the scenes' but all very much appreciated.

In January it was off to Birnam Arts Centre, starting with a great day where **Moving Minds** contributors Bella, Kathy, Margaret, Edie, Shamus and Margaret, along with family and friends, were on hand to chat to visitors



look at things now. A Travelling man now in a hoose but always a Traveller in his heart"

one of the best ways to beat stress is to share your feelings.

And, right now, **Moving Minds** is on display at the Museum of Edinburgh, including some of the **Chatterly** objects, kindly loaned to us by contributors. It is great to see so many wonderful reminders of the rich and diverse history of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers on display in such a prestigious place, can you just imagine how many visitors might pop into a museum on the Royal Mile?

Chatterly, a Cant word for 'bits and bobs', is made up of a wonderful, and truly eclectic, selection of 'significant objects that can be held in the hand' - from a hat, to a frying pan, to a ring, to a jug, to a book, to a grandchild, to a mobile phone, to a certificate, to a peg basket and lots, lots more. What would you choose as a 'significant object' that could be held in your hand?

So far, well over 50,000 people have seen all, or parts, of **Moving Minds** and book sales are steady too. That reminds me ...if you haven't already got your copy of this fascinating book contact any of the contributors or MECOPP. The exhibition just keeps on growing too with more and more people sharing their memories, photographs, **Chatterly**, and poetry - trying to dispel myths and providing an opportunity to 'see the person not the label'.

If you are a Gypsy/Traveller and want to get involved, either with **Chatterly** or creating a **Storyboard**, just get in touch with MECOPP on 0131 467 2994 or info@mecopp.org.uk.



and show off their craft skills, including a 'mini' bough camp, especially created by Kathy (above), and complete with real grass which needed a trim after only a few weeks! As Kathy said "it was really warm and comfy - I brought my first born child home to it ... very cosy. I've put the tent beside a wood because we always camped by a wood for shelter and protection from the wind."

Birnam visitors left some wonderful comments:

"What a wonderful exhibition. Thank you for giving us a remarkable insight into the lives of an amazing community of people. We can learn such a lot from them"

"Interesting reading the stories. Lovely day out with my dad (88 years old) to reminisce about the old days and

"Really made me think. I don't know any Travellers...why is that? Powerful life stories. Excellent exhibition"

In March we were invited to attend the 'On the Road to Health and Inclusion' conference, hosted by Durham County Council, and chaired by our 'old' friend Richard O'Neill. Part of **Moving Minds** was on display in the main hall with over 200 folk in attendance from all over the UK and Ireland. In the afternoon, Yvonne, Susan, Lizzie and 'the two Michelles' led a workshop about the creative ways we've been trying to tackle mental health stigma - as they used to say "a problem shared is a problem halved". By the way, did you know this old saying might actually have been based on scientific fact? According to researchers from the USA,

THELMA AND LOUISE?

OR should we say Isa and Margaret, the Film! These two 'young at heart' elders were overheard planning their road trip to the Scottish islands during a recent residential. One driving and one navigating, what's the bet they will have some stories to tell when they get back from their travels!

MORE WOMEN ON THE ROADS!



THIS year has seen driving success for two younger folks - Caitlin McMahon, 17, from Mid Argyll, recently passed her driving test after only 14 lessons, having never driven before! Caitlin said that she was completely surprised when the examiner said she had passed, "Ardrihaig is fairly out of the way so having my licence is brilliant. I can drive to work in Lochgilphead and to visit my family at Duncholgan". She now has her own car, a Ford Fiesta, and is even driving to Glasgow for the first time this weekend to go to a Bruno Mars concert!

Meanwhile in last year's Barrie News, we reported on Shelby Townsley's career success. Well, this year, we can report further success for Shelby who has now also passed her driving test! Shelby, from Perth, also passed her test first time and can now be spotted zipping to and from work in her little red Suzuki Swift. Give her a wave if you see her on the road!

SHANNON IN THE FRAME WITH ARTICLE 12

ARGYLL Traveller Shannon recently became involved with Article 12, a youth rights network working with marginalised young people, including young Gypsy/Travellers. Shannon, a keen photographer, was invited to attend a recent Article 12 seminar as the official photographer. The event was held in The Lighthouse in Glasgow and she attended with her brother John, cousin William and niece Mary. She said that the seminar



really cool." Shannon is looking forward to becoming more involved with Article 12 in the future.

was really interesting as it was discussing children and young people's rights in Scotland - "it was really nice meeting up with other young people involved with the project, I met a young Gypsy/Traveller girl who has been nominated for a Young Scot Diversity Award, that was

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS!

SOME of you may remember reading about Kathy McGuigan's job success in the last edition of *The Barrie News*. Well now she has been promoted to Farm Supervisor. She started as a volunteer at the Auchindrain Museum in Argyll and then got a job helping on the land and lots of other things too! Being the multi-talented person that she is, she now teaches skills and supervises groups of young people from the local area, all of whom have special needs. She teaches them how to repair the buildings, work the land, tend the



animals, gardening, how to use various power tools – always ensuring they are abiding by the many Health and Safety regulations. Kathy loves her job, "I do

enjoy my work, it does get busy but I do get a peace and tranquility from it too. I love being in the outdoors and there are new challenges every day, either for me myself or with the boys I am teaching. It is hard work but it makes me feel good too, it's a feeling of self-achievement. And the best thing about it ... well just a few years ago I was told by the Job Centre that to get a job I would have to change my name or address and yet here I am, with a good job that I am successful at and I didn't have to change who I am".

OBAN SAINTS' TOP PLAYERS



JOHN MacDonald (front row far right), aged 12 from Ledaig, has recently started playing football for the local team, Oban Saints. He trains every Friday after school and plays in matches on a Sunday. He goes all over with his team and has played against teams from Glasgow, Hamilton and Dumbarton. John's mum Libby says that John is "football daft". John is in first year at Oban High School.

Recipe Corner - Skirlie

WHIST collecting ideas for the *Time Travellers* installation at Summerhall in October 2016 we came across many a recipe for skirlie and much debate about 'the best way' to make it. Here's one recipe that was shared:

Ingredients

- Trimmings of fat or dripping
- Onions
- Rough oatmeal
- Black tea

Method

- Take fat and fry in pan
- Add onions until browned
- Add oatmeal
- Add cup of black tea
- Add sugar (optional)
- Eat while hot

How do you make skirlie? Do you add a cup of tea or not?

SPECIAL WHEELCHAIR DONATION

ACTION for Kids, a charity helping disabled young people, raised funds for a special buggy for Margaret MacDonald in Argyll.

Margaret, who gets around in a wheelchair, was delighted to receive the lightweight buggy which will help her to get out and about more easily.

AWESOME EIGHT

WITH the birth of Mary Jane at the beginning of April John and Edie are now the proud grandparents of no less than EIGHT granddaughters, Edie calls them her 'awesome eight' – "nothing better than granddaughters", said the proud granny, "wee Nevada, she was born in November and I kid you not I think she has had a different bow on every day since she was born, she's even got a 6 inch one now, almost bigger than her wee head".

EDINBURGH CASTLE TRIP

A Lothian family were awarded a family day ticket for Edinburgh Castle – somewhere they had never been before, but had always wanted to visit. A great day was had by all, the kids especially enjoyed the castle jail and seeing the conditions that people would have been kept in. Typical Edinburgh weather meant it was blowing a gale – but that didn't stop their fun!

LETTERS FROM ACROSS THE POND

Hello everyone,

Yep I'm back again. I did say you would never get rid of me. Yes I'm still in Canada and I've added a new edition to my wee family (a baby boy this time called Davey Hilton Jr). Canada at this time of year is covered in snow, that's one thing I would like to be home for the winter!! Cos winters here get very, very cold and snowy, but on the other hand the summers here are long and hot so I love it! Just the other day it was -27 with the wind chill but I've seen winters here go to -41 degrees, that was bad, I felt like my eyeballs were freezing. Hope to see you all soon.

Love Jamielee xxx



Hello Scotland,



I've been living in Trinidad & Tobago with my husband Peter for 16 years - and before here, I have stayed in Houston, Texas and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I sure do like to travel! I love the adventure of going somewhere new, seeing new places and making new friends.

Trinidad & Tobago is so peaceful and warm - the beaches are beautiful. But no matter where I go, I always feel like Scotland is my home. I love the snowy winters and the hills and glens. Beautiful Edinburgh, my home town, will always have a special place in my heart. My family are all here and I really do miss them when I am away. But now we have a new adventure planned...we are planning another move...back to Scotland! And I am looking forward to getting involved in the things I've read about in *The Barrie News*! Caledonia I'm coming home. Hope to meet you soon.

Violet x

DAVID TURNS 70 AND CAN SEE FOR 100 MILES!

DAVID McDonald, of Oban, will hit the big 70 this year. David's mother, Catherine, will also celebrate a special birthday this year, when she turns 90 in May.

Catherine is still fighting fit and keeping the staff in check at the Lynn of Lorn Care Home in Benderloch. Meanwhile, David told MECOPP he "could see for 100 miles" when he finally got a new pair of glasses! I think we can all agree that David looks smashing in his new specs!



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ... IN EDINBURGH!

OH WELL, maybe we'll get to go 'international' another time? Building on the success of the Creative Breaks we were invited to talk about the project at the International Short Breaks Association conference in August, attended by over 300 delegates from across the world. Michelle, Susan and Kathy showed photographs and talked about the programme they've been running and how popular the creative breaks have been - a good opportunity for everyone to reflect on the success of the programme to date as well as promote to other agencies. Despite being a bit nervous, Kathy and Susan were amazing, giving honest and very moving accounts of what the breaks have meant to them and their families. In fact, some of the audience were even moved to tears during the workshop. As one of them said "I was nervous at the beginning but when we started talking it just made me a bit emotional, and people were taking it in, you could see it meant something". We often hear that Gypsy/Travellers are 'hard to reach' or 'don't want to engage', well this programme has certainly rebuked those stereotypes because each ressie has had a waiting list!

TRAVELLERS LEAD TRAINING AT UNIVERSITIES

FOUR TRAVELLERS delivered Gypsy/Traveller awareness-raising training to over 40 social work students at Stirling University in March. The sessions were really well received by the students - here are just a couple of the comments: "I found the seminar extremely informative from start to end and I learnt a lot of new information about Travellers which I did not know"

"Really helpful day, feel I have learnt a lot and would be so much more confident if I ever was to work with Gypsy/Travellers in the future"

And in May, community trainers will be leading another two sessions with student nurses at the University of Dundee.

MELA MAGIC IN PERTH AND EDINBURGH



GYPSY/TRAVELLERS took part in two successful Wellbeing Melas in Perth and Edinburgh in October. The Melas - a Sanskrit word for gathering - involved a number of different activities all with the aims of celebrating diversity and promoting positive mental health.

Visitors to both Melas were treated to massage tasters, henna tattoos, flower-making, and more, and were invited to try their hand at seated yoga, Zumba, tai chi, and Latin dancing to name just a few!

Over 300 visitors attended the Edinburgh Mela, and 150 attended the Perth Mela, all from a variety of different communities.

FREE LEISURE CARDS?

IT might be worth checking if you are entitled to any free or low cost leisure cards in your local areas. A group of Gypsy/Traveller ladies in Lothian have signed up and been enjoying the gym, swimming and a lot of Zumba! We're pretty sure the jacuzzi and sauna

have been well used too!

Exercise is not only good for the waistline but also good for your mental health too - it can make you feel happier, less stressed, reduce the risk of major illnesses (such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes) and give you more motivation.

DON'T GIVE UP THE DAY JOB!

AT a Young Carers conference Michelle tried her hand as 'Jeremy Paxman' when she interviewed a mother and daughter about their experiences. Both were really nervous but proved to be naturals and completely wowed the audience, meanwhile Michelle has gone back to her 'day job'!

Lords-a-Leaping!

ROSEANNA McPhee and Betty Irvine from the Gypsy/Traveller community joined the panel for an event at the Just Festival in Edinburgh last August. Along with Fiona Watson from Survival International and Stephanie Bunn from the University of St Andrews they discussed the topic: 'is a nomadic way of life incompatible with the 21st century?' Fiona has worked with indigenous people across the world and Stephanie worked with pastoral nomads in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia. The similarities, as well as the differences, between nomadic peoples were debated at this busy event chaired by Professor Colin Clark and attended by a good cross-section of the general public, including a Lord!

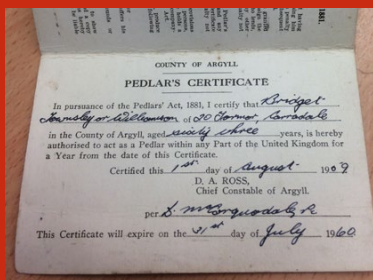
IN PARLIAMENT

MANY Gypsy/Travellers were involved in giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee in 2012-13 and speaking to MSPs both at Holyrood and on sites. The MSPs were shocked by what they heard and saw and the inquiry reports, into accommodation and care, used strong words to call for a long list of improvements and changes.

Four years on many people would say 'not a lot has changed' so hopefully it is good news that the new committee, now called the Equalities and Human Rights Committee, has said that they will follow up the work of previous committees and look into whether there has, or hasn't, been any progress.

HAWKING - A LIFE SKILL WORTH PASSING ON

BETSY MacDonald recently obtained her Pedlar's certificate from Oban Police Station as she plans to teach her twin, teenage daughters, the art of hawking. As a young person, Betsy used to sell various things door to door, with her mother, in the Carradale area



where she grew up. Her granny, Bridget Townsley, was also a hawker in the 1930's and Betsy still has her granny's Pedlar's certificate (see above). Her brother also sold kindling and firewood in the Kintyre area for many years. She recently

took her daughters, Ashley and Shannon, back to Carradale to sell heather sprays around the doors. Betsy said that they had a really positive and lovely experience as a number of people remembered and recognised her from when she was a wee girl, with one woman

inviting Betsy and the twins in for tea and scones. As Betsy said, "I want to teach the girls hawking, as it is a life skill for them, you don't know what the future holds and this will be a way that they can work and earn money for themselves if they have to."