

The BARRIE NEWS

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

TRAVELLERS MOVE MINDS AT EDINBURGH FESTIVAL



THIS YEAR'S Edinburgh Festival showcased a number of exhibitions, workshops, talks and performances involving Gypsy/Travellers. A series of events were held as part of the Just Festival programme, including storytelling, training, a drama performance and a panel discussion.

Over 3,000 people visited the Moving Minds exhibition which was on display at St John's Church Hall on Princes Street for the entire month of August. Visitors to the exhibition, which features a series of storyboards in which Gypsy/Trav-

ellers share personal and deeply moving memories and experiences, left comments saying how moved they were by the stories shared.

Some of the highlights of this year's Just Festival were the Gypsy/Traveller events, including a Just Conversation with John Finnie MSP, Susan Townsley, Roseanna McPhee and Georgia McCann, where they discussed some of the many challenges faced by the community today and offered some suggestions that could lead to progress.

FREE WINTER 2015

IT'S BARRIE NEWS FOR GYPSY/TRAVELLERS

WELCOME to the first edition of The Barrie News – the only newspaper dedicated to sharing positive stories about Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland.

This newspaper replaces some of the sensationalist and unhelpful headlines about the community with inspiring, heart-warming

stories. Adopting the word for 'great' in Cant – the language spoken by many Scottish Gypsy/Travellers – this newspaper focuses on all the 'barrie' things that have been happening for Gypsy/Travellers across Scotland. Stories about real people that never make it into the news.

CREATIVE BREAKS

GYPSY/TRAVELLERS from across Scotland have been taking part in a series of residential trips funded by Shared Care Scotland's Creative Breaks fund.

Residential trips have been held in Pitlochry, Callander and Appleby, with day events also held in Perth, Oban and Edinburgh – all with a focus on improving health and wellbeing. Participants have found themselves doing weird and wonderful things, including laughter therapy, African drumming, basket-weaving, storytelling, herbalism, mindfulness and much more!

All those who have attended so far have spoken about the positive benefits of taking part. As one woman put it, "I'm on top of the world reaching out for more! It's been like a fresh drink of water on a hot day. Loved all the activities and the people. I'm going home with love and joy and going to pass it on".



SCOTTISH TRAVELLERS IMPRESS AT UK CONFERENCE

LIZZIE JOHNSTONE, Charlene MacDonald and Kathy McGuigan travelled to Birmingham recently to deliver a workshop at the Health on the Margins conference. The workshop, attended by a combination of health, social care and local government professionals focused on mental health and the work Gypsy/Travellers have been doing with MECOPP. Feedback from the workshop was overwhelmingly positive, with one participant awarding it 10 stars out of a maximum of 5!

PROJECT OFFERS A CHANCE TO TRY SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT



OVER 20 Gypsy/Travellers from Perth and Kinross and north Argyll took part in a project to learn more about Self-Directed Support (SDS), the new way that local authorities in Scotland provide social care support.

The project, a joint venture between MECOPP and Diversity Matters, offered participants small amounts of money to 'try out' what they might do with SDS and the results were great!

One man used the money to buy a second-hand mobility scooter to help him get out and about more independently; two carers used the money to purchase a block of driving lessons to get them started; one carer bought annual membership for Historic Scotland so that she can take regular breaks with the person she cares for and do something that interests them both; a group of carers hit the Rewind Festival in July to let their hair down and have a break away, and the list goes on!

MACDONALD WOMEN HAVE THE X-FACTOR!



Shannon MacDonald from Oban and X-Factor winner Ben Haenow

X-FACTOR winner Ben Haenow had the pleasure of meeting two of the MacDonald women from Oban! Mary MacDonald and her daughters, Charlene, Margaret and Shannon, travelled to Aberdeen to see the X-Factor on their UK tour. Not content

with having front row seats, Charlene and Shannon also managed to stop the car-carrying finalists Ben Haenow and Stevi Ritchie after the performance, bagging hugs and photographs with the stars before they headed off!

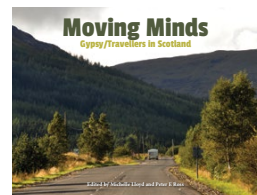
ARTS & CULTURE



PRESTIGIOUS WELSH SHOWCASE FOR RENOWNED ARTIST

ARTWORK by Shamus McPhee, a renowned Gypsy/Traveller artist from Perthshire, was shown during July at the prestigious Welsh venue, The Riverfront, in Newport.

The exhibition, "Aspects of Gypsy/Traveller life" examines social attitudes towards Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland and was part of The Gypsy Maker project, is a new initiative by the Romani Cultural and Arts Company.



BOOK SALES GOING WELL

MOVING MINDS - Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, the book published by MECOPP last October, has been doing well.

The book is full of powerful stories of the lives of people from Scotland's Gypsy/Traveller community and is at times moving, funny and as Professor Colin Clark says, "a real page turner". It is widely available in bookshops and through MECOPP.

WAGONS ROLL AS YOUNG TRAVELLER GETS READY FOR BUSINESS



YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR Paul Stewart from Edinburgh is putting the finishing touches on an old Gypsy wagon he hopes to turn into a business venture. The wagon, which has already pulled in crowds in central Edinburgh, is being restored to make appearances at other events.

FIRST WORLD WAR EXHIBITION RECOGNISES CONTRIBUTION OF GYPSY/TRAVELLERS

AN EXHIBITION examining the role Scottish Gypsy/ Travellers played in the First World War is due to go on display soon in Perth and Kinross. The exhibition called *Heroes or Raj Hantle?* was developed by Perth and Kinross Council and local artist Shamus McPhee. Created with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund it will be exhibited in locations throughout the area in 2015 and 2016 as part of First World War centenary commemorations.

The project title uses a Gypsy Cant expression for "mad folk" to highlight the way that people were sometimes wrongly labelled in the past.

The exhibition covers the history, origins, and language of Gypsy/Travellers and their participation in the war, with some personal accounts such as the story of Private William Johnston, affectionately known as Ow' Weegz. Private Johnston was shot in the head whilst serving with the Black Watch but after recovering in hospital decided to re-enlist with the Seaforth Highlanders and on his return to the front was once again shot in the head.

Personal stories like Ow' Weegz dispel the myths that Gypsy/Travellers do not contribute to society and show just how much people were prepared to sacrifice to serve their country.

There are also display



Private William, Ow' Weegz, Johnston pictured in his uniform

panels covering the home front, the role of Gypsy/ Traveller women and the impact of social attitudes at that time on the community at home.

The exhibition also tackles the impact of shell shock on the soldiers and what kind of support was available to them at that time. Finally, the story is brought up-to-date with

a panel on contemporary issues such as Combat Stress that veterans today may experience and the support available to them.

To complement the display panels, artist Shamus McPhee will be exhibiting a series of paintings commissioned to further explore the themes.

TINKER'S HEART – NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

HISTORIC SCOTLAND has officially recognised the Tinker's Heart in Argyll as being of national cultural significance, the first monument relating to Gypsy/Travellers to be given the status.

The Tinker's Heart, which consists of an arrangement of quartz stones, is considered sacred by many Gypsy/Travellers who have used the site for weddings, christenings and funerals for hundreds of years. Historic

Scotland's decision came after a petition was lodged in the Scottish Parliament calling on the site to be given special protection.

Jess Smith, along with the HOTT (Heart of the Travellers) group, spearheaded the campaign to have the Tinker's Heart recognised, said, "The Heart of Argyll is a legacy where our young can visit, build pride in their roots and know we walked this land for a very long, long time".

TRAVELLER'S STORY PUBLISHED BY SCOTTISH BOOK TRUST



A STORY written by Argyll Traveller, David McDonald, was published on the Scottish Book Trust's website as part of its Journeys project. McDonald submitted a piece entitled "Summer Days Past" in which he recalled spending his childhood summers travelling around the country. At SMHAFF 2015 his story was even read out to an audience of admirers in Oban.

AUCHINDRAIN MUSEUM HOSTS SUMMER CAMP



Time for a cuppa, the fire is lit under the chitties



Photos by Shamus MacDonald

Demonstrating the traditional crafts of wreath-making and wooden flower-carving in the afternoon sun

THE Auchindrain Museum in Argyll held a 'Summer Camp' giving Gypsy/ Travellers a platform to demonstrate traditional craft-making and talk about their lives. A small group of Gypsy/Travellers camped at the museum

for two days and showed visitors how to make a traditional bow camp and crafts such as basket-weaving, carving wooden pegs and making wooden and paper flowers, as well as fortune-telling.

WAITING LIST FOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS

A WAITING list had to be created for the latest Gypsy/Traveller awareness-raising training session commissioned by Perth and Kinross Council. The training, which is co-designed and delivered by Gypsy/Traveller trainers, was booked up within hours of being offered to Council staff, leading the Council to organise another session several months later.



The training sessions, organised by MECOPP, have continued to prove popular among service providers across the country and are being introduced into university teaching.

COME DINE WITH ME

GYPSY/TRAVELLERS in Argyll are getting together every month for dinner and activities. Working with Siubhan, Hope Kitchen, a community organisation based in Oban, is providing dinners for Gypsy/Travellers every month as a way of bringing people together and fostering stronger community links.

Attending the first of the get-togethers, one of the Travellers said, "This is the first time I've been served dinner in years!"

GREEN-FINGERS SPRUCE UP EDINBURGH SITE

GREEN-FINGERED Gypsy/Travellers living at Craigmillar spruced up the site by potting up plants on pitches and at the entrance to the site. Edinburgh Greenspace Trust provided the half whisky barrels for the gardeners to plant in and held a successful day of bulb planting in the sunshine.

YOUNG TRAVELLER OVERCOMES BARRIERS TO STUDY LAW

A YOUNG Traveller from Argyll has just completed her first year of a law degree at Dundee University. This is a great achievement for any young person, but is even more remarkable given that she is registered blind, suffers from epilepsy, and was hit with glandular fever at the start of her course. Despite the challenges, she has come through to complete her first year.

Her mother said, "She has always been determined, right back from when she was a baby. When she was six months old she stopped breathing but her determination pulled her through. She doesn't let anything get in her way. I'm so proud of her and all that she has achieved".

AT the University of Dundee following a training session led by Fiona, Violet, Georgia and Susan a student nurse sent this email:

"Just wanted to give you an email to say that the class that we had today was great. I really hoped that you would let the ladies know that they totally changed my perspective on Travellers and how they live their life. It was really interesting to know how they thought and especially learn about the stigma that they face. It was good that they could answer all our questions and help make us understand the way in which they live and what they face day-to-day. It really opened my eyes to how much they lack in support and assistance from our health service etc. I wanted them to know that I will certainly take what I've learnt today into my future clinical practice and ensure that they receive the services they require.

Anyway just a big thanks!"

JOBS MARKET SUCCESS STORIES

SHELBY TOWNSELY from Perth has just won Employee of the Year having been nominated by parents at a local nursery. She initially joined the nursery on a short-term internship. Her bosses were so impressed with her that they soon offered her a permanent job.

Meanwhile, over in Argyll, Kathy McGuigan has been promoted to supervisor at the Auchindrain Township Museum, supervising a team of young people with special needs.

Now in her second year, Edith Townsley continues to clock up the miles as a care worker for CarrGomm in mid-Argyll and the islands.

Further up the road in Oban, Charlene MacDonald is also on the road to success, having secured herself a place on a counselling skills course at the Argyll College.



MECOPP WINS NATIONAL AWARD

MECOPP's Gypsy/Traveller Carers Project won a national award from the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland. The 'Principles into Practice' (Respect for Diversity) award celebrates the project's innovative work on mental health with Gypsy/Travellers. "This award recognises a clear commitment to developing services that place the needs, views and rights of individuals and their families at the heart of everything you do", Colin



MacKay, Chief Executive of the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland told the MECOPP team at the ceremony.

MECOPP's Michelle Lloyd (pictured to the right of Lizzie Johnstone and Susan Townsley) said, "A huge thanks are due to all the staff and volunteers in the Gypsy/Traveller team, and in particular the Gypsy/Travellers who have had the courage to get involved and share their experiences. Well done everyone!"

WELLBEING MELA



GREAT fun was had by all at the Edinburgh Wellbeing Mela. Over 300 people attended from all walks of life and Kathy and Betty (pictured above) were kept busy making paper flowers all afternoon. This annual event brings people together from various cultures and communities to celebrate diversity and promote wellbeing. This year's activities included hula-hooping (Donna gives a demo on the next page), Tai Chi, Zumba, making music with Rhythm Stix, salsa, Makossa, henna, and lots more. Comments from this year:

"Now have greater awareness of what I can do to improve my mental health."

"Laughed, learned and had a good time. Everyone very friendly and welcoming."

"It gives me such a lift to share a space with so much friendliness, openness and acceptance."

"Made me forget my worries - laughed and smiled a lot."

"Fun afternoon with excellent feelgood factor."

"Smiles on faces, we are all human and this proved it."

"Positive vibes, community spirit and participation."

"I left feeling uplifted - truly."

"Made me feel more connected to people."

"Relaxing, exactly what I needed today, thank you, gentle but surrounded by good energy."

"Nice to be with others, reminder that doing inexpensive crafts can be good for wellbeing."

"Helpful for me to feel included, it made me much happier."

FLOWERS ON THE MOVE

Great grandmother Isabella Johnstone's beautifully crafted hand-carved flowers are heading across the world!

At the recent Perth Get Together, Isa got chatting to Christine Bowker Wilson who bought some flowers to take all the way back to New Zealand, where she now lives with her family.

When Isa nimbly scrapes away at a wee bit wood she makes it look so easy as those who have tried, and nearly lost a finger or two, know it is much harder



than it looks. Isa has been carving flowers for decades and still says she finds it relaxing. Her flowers have been bought by provosts,

politicians and people from all walks of life and were recently on display at the Summerhall Arts Centre in Edinburgh.

WHO NEEDS THE X-FACTOR?



DO YOU know who was a recording star at the tender age of 17? Yes, our very own Patsy Stewart Hilton was taped by Hamish Henderson in 1953. At the time Patsy was living in Glasgow and getting ready to say goodbye to family who were due to set sail from Greenock. Sixty-two years later, Patsy can't remember the name of the song she sang but it began with:

"At St Enoch station, the immigrants gathered,
Some laughing, some crying, some happy and gay,
But one fella stood out with his family assembled,
And he gave a deep sigh for going away ..."

As Patsy said "I mind my uncle Andrew and auntie Lizzie had that many of a family they had to use a bus and Hamish also taped my uncle Andrew piping his family up the gang-plank as they set sail for Canada."

RIDING FOR THE KING



WINNING THE DERBY (1896) From a Painting by W & M. D. Hardy

EDINBURGH-BASED Betty Irvine has an interesting story to tell. Cornelius Foy, her mother's grandfather's brother, was the first jockey to ride for kings.

Cornelius, known as Charlie Foy, was born in Cumbria in 1881 and became a jockey to King Edward VII. In his best season, 1912, he rode 60 winners,

including winners of the Eclipse, Cambridgeshire, the Manchester November Handicap, Champion Stakes & Chester Cup.

It is said that he earned over £50,000 during his career in the saddle - a lot of money in those days! As well as all his winnings he was presented with a golden whip by King George V.

Image from Wikimedia Commons

SMHAFF 2015



Balloon-modelling with Mr Puffin keeps the youngsters amused



Photographs from young Argyll photographer Shannon MacDonald at the Summerhall exhibition



Trying out a bit of basket-weaving for the first time



In the groove, some hip-swivelling salsa gets everyone moving and smiling at the Wellbeing Mela



Donna demonstrates her natural flair for hula-hooping



With such great music from Makossa, and such a relaxed atmosphere, everyone just had to get up and dance



Jess Smith draws a crowd



Demonstrating the art of paper flower-making



Getting your hands on a rifle at the Black Watch Museum display at the Perth Get-Together

Yep it's SMHAFF time again. For those of you who don't know, that is the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival – a national festival, now in its ninth year, which uses the arts to challenge stigma. Once again Gypsy/Travellers have been displaying artwork and hosting events throughout the country during October.

One of the world's largest social justice festivals, with annual attendances of over 20,000, this year's SMHAFF included over 300 events staged across Scotland, including film, performing

arts, literature, music and visual arts. The Festival aims to support the arts and challenge preconceived ideas about mental health and identity.

Gypsy/Travellers in Scot-

land have been contributing to SMHAFF for the last six years. This year we had a range of events in Edinburgh, Perth and Kinross and Argyll, including the launch of *The Barrie News*

– our very first edition - at Summerhall in Edinburgh on 9th October.

Gypsy/Traveller craft workers were also chatting to people and demonstrating traditional skills at the

Perth Get-Together on 10th October and the Wellbeing Mela in Edinburgh on 11th October and Jess Smith was back in Oban for an intimate evening of storytelling on 17th October.

THE ORIGINAL RECYCLERS?



DECADES before it became popular, Travellers were converting waste materials into new products. It is often forgotten, and rarely acknowledged, but they could be regarded as the original exponents of the “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” mantra. As John Cook says, “I work with scrap most of the time and you could say we were the original recyclers. My dad, and his dad before him, worked with scrap; it’s a sort of dying

trade these days”. Winna and Peter are exploring this as part of the Heat of the Moment project - capturing this important, but rarely mentioned piece of Scottish history.

WORKERS ON HAND TO DELIVER BABY AT FAMILY FUN DAY!

MECOPP workers found themselves on hand to deliver a baby when a woman in labour came along to the Perth and Kinross Family Day.

Despite being in labour for 12 hours, Margaret Hutchison, from Perth, had been sent home by the hospital that morning as her labour had not advanced enough for her to be admitted. So rather than sit at home waiting for baby number three to arrive, she took herself along to the Family Day at the Tulloch Community Centre to try and distract herself!

While her other children played and had their faces painted, Maggie sat in the hall anxiously counting the minutes between her contractions! “I just wish he’d get a move on in there”, she told staff. Unfortunately for Maggie, the baby decided not to make an appearance until almost a week after the event! Maggie finally gave birth to a health baby boy on Friday 2nd October at 4am. “He’s doing really well - definitely keeping me on my toes”.

Despite being in labour, Maggie still managed to enjoy herself at the Family Day. “Although it didn’t help move the labour on, it was great to be in nice company and help me take my mind off things. It was nice to see the kids running around having fun and gave me a chance to catch-up with some people I haven’t seen for a while”.

The Family Day included a number of activities to reduce isolation and improve wellbeing - complementary therapies, face-painting, healthy eating, arts and crafts, carer services and just time to relax and catch up over a cuppa.

Louise, who organised the event, said, “I was terrified that Maggie was going to give birth during the event! My job can be really varied but I’m pretty sure helping to deliver a baby isn’t in my job description! I’m really pleased they’re both doing well”.

MYSTERY SHOPPER TEST

A YOUNG Gypsy/Traveller who set up his own business recently passed a ‘mystery shopper’ test with flying colours. Sam (not his real name) received support from the Prince’s Trust to set up his business.

Sam received a call from a customer interested in a quote for work. Unknown to him, his mentor at the Trust had set up the enquiry to test how well he would carry out the work!

Sam visited the customer and put together a quote. With his usual personable and professional approach, he explained how he had worked out the quote and gave a price that was fair. As soon as he had completed the work, Sam’s boss appeared from inside the house smiling and congratulating him on doing such a good job.

Although disappointed that it wasn’t a real job, Sam was delighted that he had passed the test! Speaking about her son, Sam’s mother said, “I’m so proud of him. He’s a good lad and works hard and deserves to do well”.

BARRIE NEWS MAKES THE NEWS



EVEN before the first print run, our very own Barrie News was photographed in the Courier and the Perthshire Advertiser in a feature about the launch of the First World War exhibition - notice the guy on the left in the photo. Yep, it’s our very own camera-shy Peter Ross!

ON THE ROAD, OR MAYBE NOT JUST YET!

LIVING in a remote area isn’t easy for carers - buses are irregular, trains are costly and mobile phone reception is very unpredictable. So one keen person decided to learn to drive, Pitlochry-born Roseanna has been trying to secure sufficient funds for driving lessons for years. Eventually, with a couple of small grants, she had just enough

funds to start the dreaded driving lessons.

The lessons were booked and a new provisional licence was ready to be used. Or so she thought - Roseanna has hunted the chalet high and low but can she find it? It was obviously put in a safe place, but where that ‘safe’ place is no-one quite knows.

The hunt goes on ...

A LETTER FROM CANADA

Hello to my old crew,

This is Jamielee Devers. Sure you will all remember me, I’m the one that everyone was sick looking at in those old videos.

Well, as most of you already know, I’m in Canada. Have been now for nearly four years, married to a Canadian Traveller who has lived here all his life but his roots are from Scotland too, and also have a wee lassie called Alicia - she’s two - who not only speaks Cant and English but French too, haha. Who would’ve ever thought it - me in Canada, married and a daughter - certainly not me.

I hope to come back to my roots in Scotland next year for a visit, so keep going till I come see you guys.

All the best from across the big pond.

Jamielee



RESEARCH TRIO

EVER thought you knew what the word 'research' means? Think again! Courtesy of the Department of Health in England, Georgia, Susan and Michelle recently spent two days in a swanky hotel in Doncaster 'living the high life' with fellow research enthusiasts from the Gypsy/Traveller community, civil society and the world of academia. The 4Rs (Research, Results, Respect and Rights) seminar was a great opportunity to share good, and not so good, practice from the world of research. In short, we deliberated, discussed, debated, documented, digested and dissected, in great detail, the dos and don'ts of – yes, you've guessed it RESEARCH! A follow-up is already being planned for next year.

BACK TO SCHOOL



BETSY MacDonald recently went back to her old school Campbeltown Grammar, in mid-Argyll. Betsy, Ashley and Shannon, along with Amanda, wowed school pupils with their stories and memories at a recent Diversity Day held at the school.

The aim of the day, the first of its kind to be held at the Grammar, was to launch the school's new anti-bullying policy, and directed at S3 and S5 pupils.

A busy programme was designed to help pupils better understand how in-

timidation, oppression and hatred can affect people from minority groups and lead to mental and physical suffering.

In an email after the event, Catherine Cameron, Depute Head Teacher, said "their delivery was very professional, well-paced and pitched perfectly for the age range of the pupils involved. I'd like to thank Amanda, Betsy and MECOPP for helping to bring this message to our school. Pupils and Teachers were enthralled by their presentation and many said afterwards how much they enjoyed it and how powerful they felt their message to be".

CELTIC CONNECTIONS

ANOTHER first for the highly successful Moving Minds exhibition which will be on display at the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow, during the 2016 Celtic Connections international music festival.

Celtic Connections is the largest annual winter music festival of its kind and the UK's premier celebration of Celtic music. This year's star attractions include Aidan O'Rourke, Karine Polwart, Aly Bain, Eddi Reader, Baaba Maal, Moishé's Bagel and Barbara Dickson.

As part of the Creative Breaks programme, a group from the community will attend Sam Lee's concert at The Tron in January and participate in music workshops, including learning how to play the bodhran and the ukulele.

HIBS GAMECHANGER SCORES

IN November, Gypsy/Traveller carers and their families spent the day at the Hibs football ground in Edinburgh as part of the Lothian Family Day, part of the Hibs/NHS Lothian GameChanger partnership.

While one end of the room was taken over by massage therapists offering shiatsu and therapeutic massages, the other end of the room was taken over by snakes and spiders brought in by Animal Zoo! Children had a great time getting their faces painted, making paper monsters and, if they were brave enough, holding some of the reptiles! While the children were occupied, adults treated themselves to massages, and a bit of pampering and caught-up with each other over tea and sandwiches.

Also on offer was a variety of workshops, including hula-hooping and drumming, which got everyone up and moving about! A group of ardent football fans were also treated to a tour of the stadium.

Ardent Jambo (Hearts) fan Donna, who organised the day, said, "It was a lot of work organising today but worth it to see people leaving feeling relaxed and with a smile on their faces".



TRAVELLERS REDISCOVER TRADITIONAL SKILLS



GYPSY/TRAVELLERS from across Scotland have been rediscovering their traditional skills. Richard O'Neill an English Romany storyteller and wood carver (pictured) who makes everything from traditional pegs, to spoons, stools and children's toys, was delighted to work with community members earlier this year. His aim: to encourage more Travellers to allow the public to hear their wonderful stories and to have a handcrafted item in their homes.

Over the last year Richard has led several workshops encouraging carers to tap into their roots and gain the confidence to become storytellers themselves. Stories ranging from childhood memories to ghost stories have been shared around campfires at Lendrick Lodge near

Callander and the Haybergill Centre near Appleby, with the older generation showing the younger ones how it's done!

Before television, radio and even books there was storytelling, the art of informing and entertaining, and the very best storytellers were acknowledged to be the Travellers. For Travellers storytelling was not only an entertainment and a way of storing family history, but also a way of passing the time while making traditional crafts.

Michelle Foy from Argyll reclaimed her peg-making skills following one of the workshops. "I used to make a lot of pegs years ago", she said. "I find it really de-stressing, it really relaxes me. It's great to pick it up again". Michelle's pegs are so good she has already been commissioned to make more!

Speaking about the workshops, Richard said, "It was fantastic to swap stories and woodworking skills and discuss how we can fulfil the growing interest in all aspects of Traveller culture, particularly our storytelling and traditional wood crafts".

