



STILL HERE STILL PROUD



TRAVELLER PRIDE IN DONEGAL 2021



An Roinn Leanai, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

STILL HERE STILL PROUD

Published by Donegal Travellers Project CLG



Photos by Clive Wasson



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Published by
Donegal Travellers Project, Port House, Port Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
CHY12244

Photographs by Clive Wasson

Designed and Printed by
Browne Printers Ltd., Letterkenny, Co Donegal

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*This book is dedicated to the memory of
our dear friend and colleague Patrick McGinley*

CONTENTS

Still Here Still Proud **6**

Traveller History **7**

Donegal Pride *'A photographic collection of Traveller families living through COVID-19'* **8**

DTP Staff working through COVID-19 **66**



DTP Community Healthcare worker Margaret (Aggie) Boyle





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Ann Friel

This social history project is a collection of photographs that tells a story of identity, history, culture and shows the deep roots of Traveller Pride in Donegal throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As a Human Rights activist and Traveller woman it is important to celebrate and promote our culture and history. The Traveller community is poorly documented throughout Irish History and this social history book tells a story through photographs of Travellers living through COVID-19 and shows Travellers in Donegal standing together in solidarity to protect Traveller culture and history.

This collection celebrates Traveller women, Traveller men and Traveller children and young people and our Elders at every level of this project. This collection of photographs puts a value on the traditions and culture of the Traveller community in particular exploring the importance of religion, identity and heritage across Donegal.

The struggle for Traveller rights makes us who we are today – a resilient community who has protected our culture and identity over decades. Knowing our history shows us who we are, our strengths and where we came from as a distinct minority ethnic community. We need to know our past to build our future so we can continue to work towards creating a more equal society where Traveller history and culture is celebrated and respected. The bonds of community, family and friends hold us altogether and create the invisible threads that connects us as the Traveller community.

As a community, we still continue to experience racism, discrimination, poverty, isolation and marginalisation and throughout the pandemic these inequalities experienced by the Traveller community have become further exacerbated. However, despite these ongoing challenges, I have seen the resilience, strength, pride and commitment to family and community across many Traveller families. As Travellers we are still here and still standing as a distinct minority

proud of each other and our culture and this book shows this sense of Traveller Pride. This collection is important as a social history project as it has created a history of the Traveller Community in Donegal.

Traveller Pride represents standing together in solidarity in celebrating our culture, heritage and history. Our photographs demonstrate our distinctness and the diversity within the community. We value the ‘art of thinking independently together’ which has been significantly influenced by our nomadic traditions.

The Traveller community continually lives in a wave of a storm, which is racism and these storms have not eroded



our identity but they have enabled our community to develop deeper roots to resist assimilation and to maintain, protect and love our distinct culture, heritage and community.

I want to thank members of the Traveller community throughout Donegal for participating on this project and wish them best health and happiness for all members of their families and the broader Traveller Community.

In the words of Maya Angelou ‘We should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value, no matter what their colour’.

Ann Friel
*Pavee Beoir Human Rights Activist
Donegal Travellers Project*



TRAVELLER HISTORY



Dr. Rosaleen McDonagh

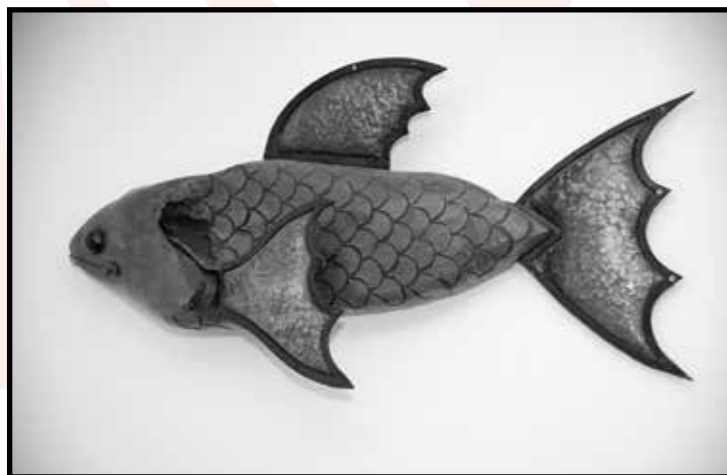
Curating Traveller history will be painful. That pain will be felt by the Traveller and the settled listener. It won't be easy for both communities to listen and to be heard. That settled voice can no longer be considered the centre. There will be no more editing, erasing, diminishing, questioning or accusing.

The task of excavating our history can only be done by our young people. A generation that is bound up in Traveller identity and Traveller heritage. People that stretch and pull the elasticity of Traveller ethnicity. Accuracy comes from authenticity. The analysis is only for the spectator. The ephemeral cultural debris of our lives must be gathered. The evictions, the violence, segregated education, the loss of opportunity, the loss of possibility, the loss of life, these circumstances must be spoken of. Disposable lives. Lives that were not afforded status and citizenship. Lives that were often undocumented. The personal becomes the political. The political becomes the collective. Varied voices, dispersed experiences, memories bring their own punishment. The guilt, the shame. The shame of being shamed. Acknowledgement brings an unspoken respect. Formal history inferred our inferiority, that we were subjects of settled memory and artifacts. Our songs, music and stories were the reference for Irish Travellers. The add on, the appendix, the footnote.

The resilient generations before us articulated and carried history through oralism. The story, the voice, the whisper, the song, the lament grounded in particular locations throughout our country. The power, the parallel, the divide, evidence of oppression. The resistance, the outsider, a

positioning that placed us in the wilderness. The isolation, the alienation, ethnic cleansing, slow incremental punishment at it's worst. Irish identity is not linear, it has many hidden histories. Traveller history being one. That continues to unfold outside the perimeters of the written word. History may well be one damn thing after another. Traveller ethnicity has always been slippery, tangled up with Irish identity. The superior and inferior roles ascribed tells a certain type of story. The object, the Traveller is now the subject. Our agency, our autonomy ensures history is not just about winners and losers but about those of us who shaped and coloured this country of ours.

Dr. Rosaleen McDonagh





St. Gabriel's Barrel Top Wagon



DTP staff team Derval Broderick, Maeve McIvor, Rose McDonagh, Chrissie McGinley, Hugh Friel, Ann Friel, Margaret Boyle, Katie Boyle, Siobhan McLaughlin, Annie Mongan, Patrick McGinley (RIP), Martin Mongan with Ita Ward Public Health Nurse for Travellers





DONEGAL PRIDE

***‘A photographic collection
of Traveller families
living through COVID-19’***





Edward and Margaret Boyle with their son Edward Boyle junior and kids Emma, Lexie and Katie, daughter Maria Boyle with partner Raymond Gibson and kids Joseph, Courtney, Chantelle, Margaret and Shania and daughter Pamela Boyle with kids Amy and Jamie





Noelle and Eannes McGinley with their sons Dennis and Connor



Maureen, Francis and Martin Friel



Big Isle Halting Site





Alex and Alanna, Josie and Margaret, Pat and Emer, Alex (Ecky) McGinley with the children Margaret, Margarita and Joe





DTP/Involve Youth Group - Barry Ward, Involve Youth Coordinator Martin Mongan, DTP Community Healthcare Worker Michael Mongan, Shay McGinley, Alex and Luke Hutchinson



Margaret Ward with her children John, Gerard and Michael



Gerard O'Rourke



Caitlin Boyle



Bridget McDonagh, Kathleen McDonagh and her son Michael



Tiffany Connors, Montana Connors, and Crystal Connors



Luke Kelly





Paddy-Joe Jr Ward



Temporary Roadside Halt



Paul and John O'Rourke



Danny Connors





Nellie and Tom Mongan



Pat McGinley





Skye and Lucy McGinlay with their dog pugsy



Tessie Connors



JP Hegarty



Michael and Frances Boyle



Eddie Friel with Tyler, Katie and Ella



Frances and Mary Theresa McDonagh





Francie Boyle



Canal Group Housing Scheme





Mary Agnes Friel



Brigidmarie Mongan at Doonwell



Patrick McGinley (RIP)



John and Shania Donohue on their Wedding Day



Bridget Ward





Hughie Hegarty





Ned O'Reilly



Ann Marie Donegan



Temporary Roadside Halt





Jimmy Boyle with daughter Caitlin and son Logan



Shay McGinlay



Tammey Friel



Dominic Dwyer

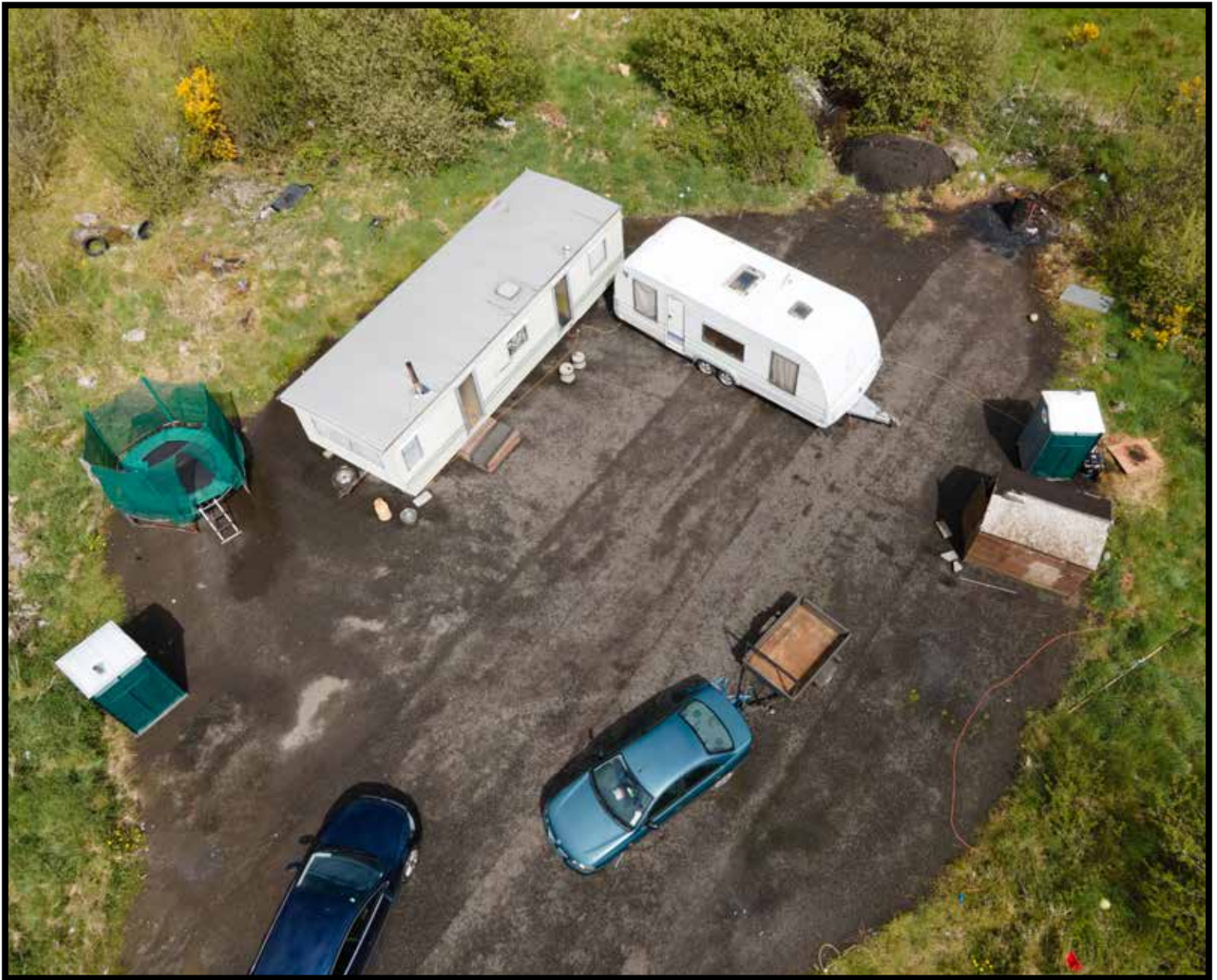


Pamela Boyle





Agnes Friel



Temporary Roadside Halt





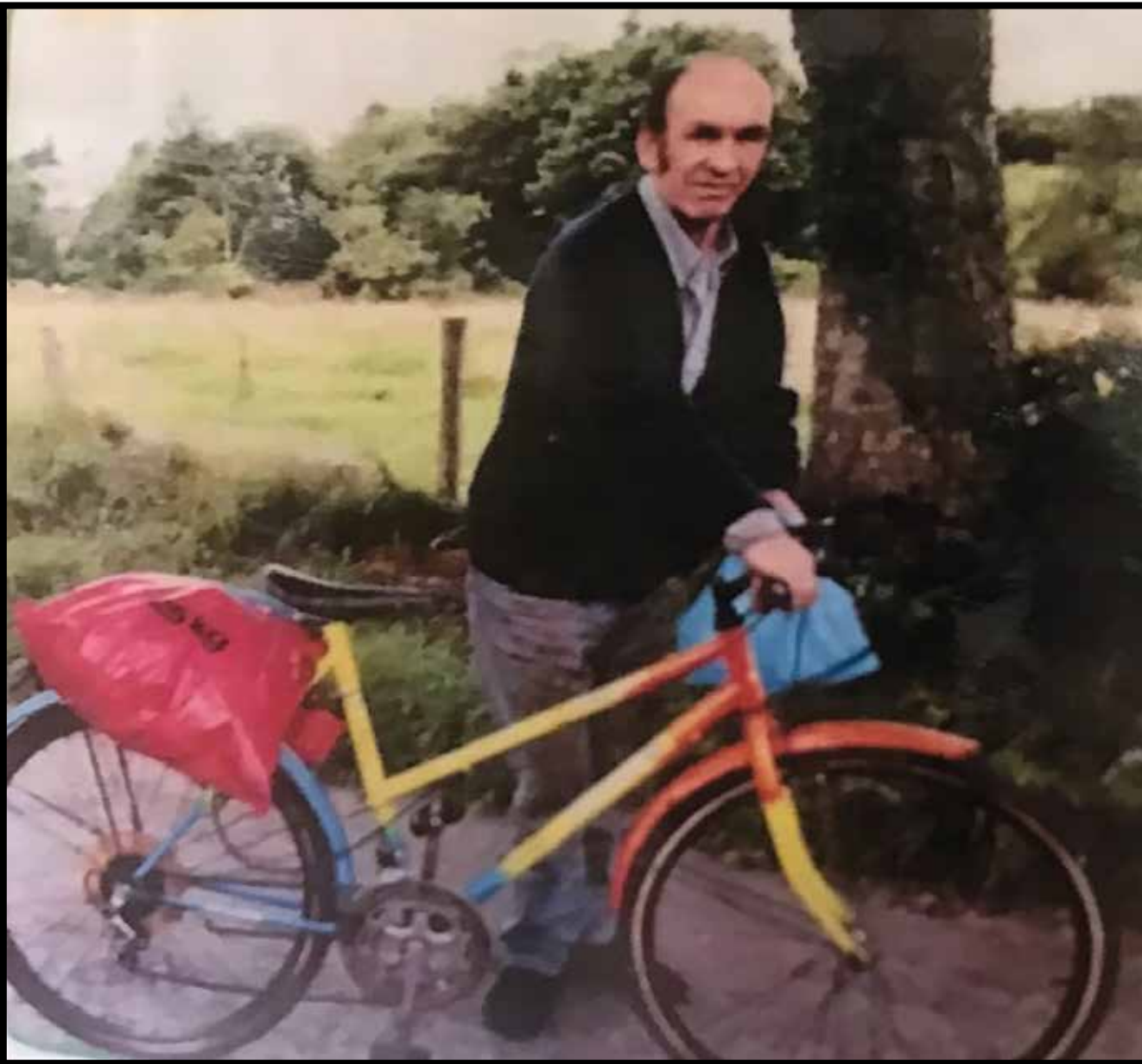
Tom and Eileen McDonagh



Martin, Brigidmarie and Lena Mongan with their dog woody



Shay McGinlay, Martin Friel, Tom Mongan and Luke Hutchinson



Frank McGrory (RIP)





Willie McGinley





Raymond Gibson and Ned Boyle





Pat, Ecky, Josie, Alex and young Joe McGinley



Francis Friel





Annie McGrory





Ballintra Halting Site



Hugh Friel



St. Gabriel's Preschool Letterkenny



John O'Rourke



Hannah Boyle



Mickey Connors and his daughter Tessie





Bridget Boyle with her daughter Rebecca Boyle and Debra Mitchell



Brian, Jimmy and Maggie Ward





Nicole and Pat O'Reilly with their daughter Philomena



Felix Connors



Bridget and Ned O'Reilly





Martin and Mary Ward





John Boyle





Dan Mongan, Anthony McDonagh and Martin Mongan



Hugh and Ann Friel with their grandson Jaxon



Leah Gallagher and David Friel and their son Jaxon



Katie Boyle, Ned Boyle, Edward Boyle and Raymond Gibson



Hugh Friel



Eileen McDonagh





Tom and Margaret Ward with their grandchildren Dolcianna, Charlie and Chloe



Michael McGinley



Martin McDonagh





Tina Connors





Josie, Margaret Emer, Pat ,Alex and Alanna McGinley and the children Margaret, Margarita and Joe



Wacky Connors and Ownie Mitchell



Martin and Kathleen McDonagh



Danny and Felix Connors





Philomena Friel and her granddaughter Caitlynn



Luke Kelly



Annie and Tom Ward on their Wedding Day



Katie and Hannah Boyle



Ned (RIP), Danny, Ownie and Ownie Jr. McGrory





Robert Friel



Agnes Friel



John McDonagh with his son Jay





John Connors, Tommy Connors, Charlie Connors, Felix Connors, Danny Connors, Dominic Dwyer and Mickey Connors and the children Danny Connors, Ownie Mitchell, Crystall Connors, Wacky Connors and Tessie Connors





Felix Connors, Mickey Connors and Dominic Dwyer



Dan and Ellen Mongan with their children Tom and Theresa



Symbols of Traveller Heritage



Kieran O'Reilly



Barry Ward, Adrian Mitchell, Luke Hutchinson and Shay McGinlay



Ann Donegan



Cullion Road Group Housing Scheme





Patrick Ward with his two sons John and Gerard



Charlie, Dolcianna and Chloe Ward



Margarita and Joe McGinley



Maria Boyle and her baby daughter Shania



Balintra Halting Site Grotto



Rose McDonagh and Ned O'Reilly



Michael and Melissa Mongan and their children Brian, Michael and Lucia



Alex (Ecky) McGinley



Paddy and Annie Mongan





Josie, Pat, Baby Margaret, Emer and Margaret McGinley



Philomena McGinlay with her daughters Skye and Lucy



Charlie and Felix Connors



Senator Eileen Flynn

In June 2020 Eileen became Senator Eileen Flynn, after being nominated and appointed by the Taoiseach Micheál Martin, and in doing so became the first Traveller to ever sit in the House of the Oireachtas. Eileen's background is in Community Development and Activism across all aspects of Irish Society.





Charlie Ward



Montana Connors



Kyle Quill and his daughter Clódagh



Donegal Travellers Quilt designed by over 100 Traveller women to express Traveller identity and pride in Donegal.



Maggie and Bridget Ward





Martin and Kathleen Ward



Assistant Project Manager Ann Friel at Donegal Travellers Project

Donegal Travellers Project Staff Team working through COVID-19



DTP Community Development workers for South Donegal Margaret Warde and Rose McDonagh



DTP Community Healthcare Worker Chrissie McGinley





DTP Community Healthcare Workers Annie Mongan and Chrissie McGinley



DTP South Donegal Team - Margaret Warde, Siobhan McLaughlin, Rose McDonagh and Maeve Mclvor



DTP Primary Healthcare Project - Katie Boyle, Chrissie McGinley, Derval Broderick, Hugh Friel, Kate Hagan, Margaret (Aggie) Boyle, Margaret Warde, Ann Friel (Coordinator), Annie Mongan, Rose McDonagh, Brigidmarie Mongan and Philomena McGinley



DTP Staff Team 2021

Katie Boyle, Ann Friel, Martin Mongan (Involve), Hugh Friel, Derval Broderick, Chrissie McGinley, Maeve McIvor (DLDC), Kate Hagan, Kyle Quill, Margaret (Aggie) Boyle, Margaret McConigley, Margaret Kelly, Rose McDonagh, Margaret Warde, Annie Mongan, Barry Mooney, Nadine Friel, Brigidmarie Mongan, Sandra McDaid, Philomena McGinlay, Joleen Kuyper, Siobhan McLaughlin and Chantelle Mongan

DTP would like want to thank the Traveller community living in Donegal who participated in this social history project. A huge thank you to you all this book would of not been made possible without your contribution and pride in telling your story through these photographs.



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...



DTP

Donegal Travellers Project, Port House, Port Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

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