



Faster, go faster!

17.3.2009 Nurses in Practice

It was perhaps a month or so ago when Lady Jane of Bentley and Dame Jeanette of Allan first mentioned the possibility of a gig with up to 500 people. Never having played to such a large number, several of the Buddy Beaters smacked their lips together in eager anticipation.

And so Buddy Beat's latest day out was to the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC) in Glasgow to play at the Nurses in Practice Conference. Jane and Frances made their own way to the venue, while Jeanette arranged for a minibus to take us to Glasgow.

The Buddy Beaters:-

Jane Bentley, Jeanette Allan, Anne Dowie, Tom Chalmers, Lesley King, Eileen McGrory, Frances Nisbet, Noreen Young, Hazel Borland and honorary Buddy Beater, Martin Savage, our friendly driver, photographer and film maker.



Noreen and Eileen await the bus to take them to their first Buddy Beat gig.

This was new members Noreen, Eileen and Hazel's first gig for Buddy Beat and they couldn't have picked a bigger induction. Honorary member Martin was our driver and we were picked up at the Lagoon Leisure Centre shortly after noon and we got to our destination just before 1pm, full of a little excitement, a little nervousness and wads of giggles. On the way to the SECC, Jeanette was heard muttering on her mobile phone to one of her minions and the words "they don't know yet" came out. When she finished she turned to us all. "I have a crazy idea...." – but more of that later.



“All Aboard! Women and children first!”



The Famous Five making their way to the venue. Anne D is doing her world famous Max Bygraves impression.



The Lomond Suite, Glasgow SECC

The afternoon event was due to commence at 2pm and our session was referred to as “The Afternoon Kickstart”.

We met up with Jane and Frances and had a quick run-through before the main event began. We had to co-ordinate arriving on stage with our chairs and then drums whilst Jeanette was addressing the congregation. We were sharing a half hour with a group called Positive Mental Awareness Drama Group from the East End of Glasgow, who performed a social inclusion piece called “Charlie’s Story”.

First up was a short film remembering last years’ Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival part of which was Renfrewshire’s “Hit the Beat!” in Ferguslie Park and guess which well-known face flashed across the big screen? Our very own Lynne Stam! Take a bow, Lynne!

The drama group was next on the agenda and their performance was entitled “Charlie’s Story” which charted how Charlie worked hard but felt stressed and isolated and how he withdrew from the community. With his illness taking over he is placed on medication by his doctors and through time finds friendship and encouragement from his peers, helping his self worth and esteem. There were no spoken words during this and the actors performed with a musical soundtrack. It was very vivid and held your attention and when the few words that needed to be put across came, they appeared on the large screen at the back of the stage, cleverly set out in silent movie mode. It was an excellent performance and a great credit to the group.



The Positive Mental Awareness Drama Group in action

Next up, Jeanette took to the podium and began her narrative while we tip-toed like baby elephants behind her, busy moving furniture and then we were on!



*Hazel, Noreen, Tom, Frances, Lesley, Eileen,
Anne in hiding, Jeanette & Jane.*

Jane performed a three minute number with us using echoes, free style, stop and starts, quiet rumbles and loud ones too, and the audience really enjoyed that. Then Jane took over and began the audience participation part. With such large numbers, Jane did not have sufficient instruments. If she had she would need a cargo container to contain them! Nevertheless, Boomwhackers had earlier been placed on as many seats as possible. For those that were unlucky not to get one, Jane fantastically announced that a set of house or car keys would do just as well and that a pen hit against the day's program could act as a drum. Within a minute, Jane clearly had them eating out of her hands and the auditorium was full of magical noise.

The Boomwhackers reverberated around the room and the chime and chinking of keys added something special to it all. Having quickly trained the gathering of nurses (What do you call a group of nurses anyway- a Nub of Nurses?), Jane then got us to play and we all jammed and the look on the participants faces was a joy to see. One lady, who I think was one of the organisers of the conference and sat in front row, was dressed in pillar-box red and she was beside herself with excitement! Jane kept the whole room going, swapping between drum and percussion for eight beats, then four, and then mischievously two before ending it all in a thunderous rumble! Buddy Beat had done it again! We received great applause and some of the feedback was excellent.

We had to quickly clear the stage as the conference instantly swung into the next stage. As we packed Jane said she had thought it strange to tell nurses to sit in chairs with plastic tubes! We reloaded Jane's Berlingo van (which had behaved in exemplary style) and then went back into the SECC. We joined forces with the PMA Drama Group and sat together in a coffee shop, swapping stories and getting to know one another.



Our very own Lesley and Anne.



*Is it Posh and Becks? Is it Tweedledum and Tweedledee?
Och, no, it's just Anne and Tom.*



The one and only Frances.



Anne and Noreen are a great double act and this Christmas are understudying The Krankies in panto.



"This cornetto doesn't taste that good!"



The Triumphant Buddy Beat-Frances, Lesley, Eileen, Ann D, Jeanette, Noreen and Hazel.

Lastly, what about Jeanette's crazy idea I hear you ask? Well, she pitched the challenge of going on a speed boat up the River Clyde. I kid you not!



*Here is Jeanette with her captive audience.
Martin is clearly trying to escape.*

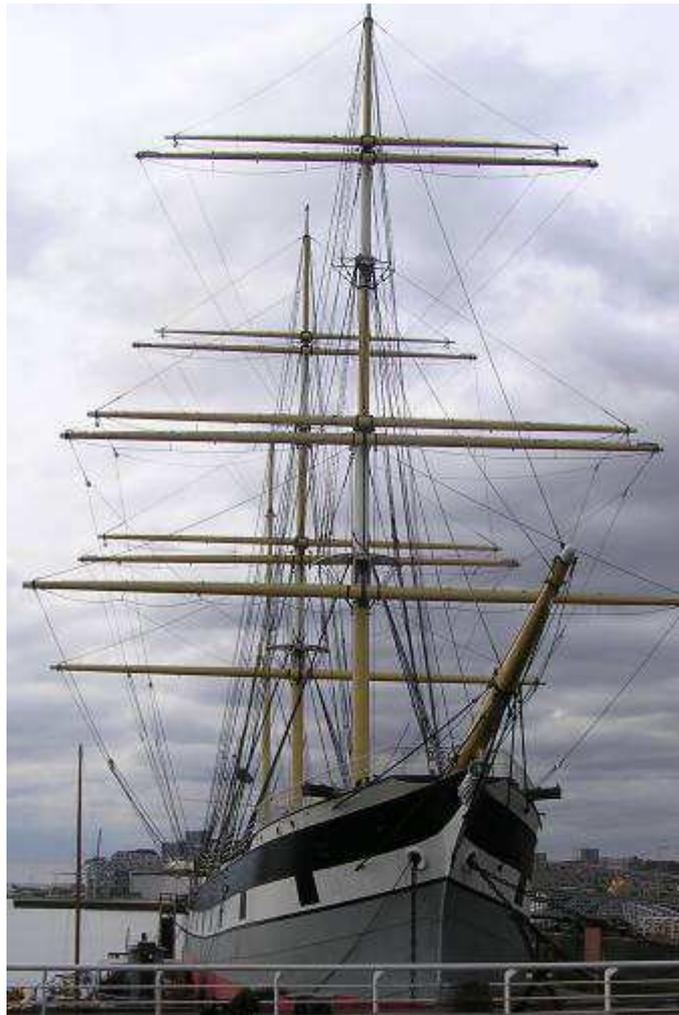
Everyone was up for it so we drove the short distance to Glasgow's Tall Ship, where we were all kitted out with our life jackets and given a quick safety talk by Captain Pugwash.



Something has tickled Jeanette. Not too sure what.



“Do you not have it in green?”



*Frances- “Is that the speedboat, Tom?”
Tom- “No, my dear that is The Tall Ship.”*

So, we all trooped onto The Tall Ship and on the far side, we took steps down to our speedboat. Captain Pugwash informed us that in the event of an evacuation it was women and children first, which was something that concerned me, being the Buddy Beat token male. Then to add to it, the boat wouldn't fire up and he had to jump-start it as we all sat thinking the same thought; "Now, how did Titanic end?"

Lesley and Eileen were first on board and bravely sat at the front, kindly being a spray buffer to Frances and myself who sat in the second row. Behind us sat Hazel and after her sat Jane and Noreen. Bringing up the rear was Anne D and Jeanette.

When we got going Captain Pugwash and his deckhand Captain Birdseye started off slowly and then suddenly the bottom lifted (the boat I mean) and we zoomed across the water.

With the wind in our hair, and our bellies going whooooo! We sped up the Clyde and took in the views of The Science Centre, The BBC and STV studios and The SECC/Armadillo. We sailed under numerous bridges and who knew that Glasgow had so many?

We went as far as The Jamaica Street Bridge before turning. We raced back the way and went by The Tall Ship and continued all the way past Braehead before heading back. Captain Pugwash had us squealing like babies when he went to turn a circle, making the boat lurch to one side, He did this more than once and I was so busy with my camera that I was not holding on, and I thought I was a goner but Frances saved me! The speed was the best part of it but a by-product of turning the boat in a circle was that it created waves which we then rode across which brought out even more giggles and whoos!

So after 30 minutes on the water, it was back inside for a welcome cup of tea courtesy of Jeanette. Everyone seemed delighted and thrilled that they had gone through with it. Aside from drumming, it is the best legal way to spend half an hour!



Anne, Noreen and Jeanette telling Jane that she will be first to walk the plank. For some reason, Jane is hanging onto that pole.



Bravehearts Lesley and Eileen in the front pews, Closely watched by Captain Birdseye.



Jane in a reflective mood before sailing;” If I should perish on the open sea, I leave all my drums to The Buddy Beat.”



You cannot deny that these two are having fun!



The Naughty Four at the back.



The BBC Studios, the Science Centre and Tower and the Waverley



“Land ahoy, Captain!”



Here is Eileen with her Napoleon Bonaparte hat on.



This is without doubt the best photo of the entire day!

Well, what a day that was! For all of us it was our largest audience ever and we went down a treat. For Hazel, Noreen and Eileen it was a baptism to remember and if they felt a tad nervous before hand, they all said that they had been glad they had come along and performed.

None of us awoke yesterday morning thinking we would spend time out on the water and it was a superb ending to our day and we all say a big “Thank you!” for that. I am sure none of us will forget the 2009 St Patrick’s Day in a hurry.

You see Jeanette, it wasn’t such a crazy idea after all- it was a stupendous one!
The End.