

30<sup>th</sup> May 2010

West End Fair,  
Ferguslie Gardens  
Paisley



Hands up if you like drumming!

With The Buddy Beat fame growing like a hurtling meteor, we were recently sought out by the organisers of the West End Fair in Paisley who asked if we could be part of their day's activities and run a couple of workshops. One of their team came to a Buddy Beat weekly meeting a little while back to get a taste of what we are all about, and liking what she saw, confirmed our appearance at the fair. The theme of the fair was "Unity in Diversity" and included a street of stalls selling the likes of confectionary, hot food, candles, African food, Street Pastors (who help those on the streets) and Polish craftwork.

There were many activities taking place during the event and these included the St Columba's School Pipe Band from Kilmacalm, Rwandan dancers called Passionate Warriors, a selection of historic emergency services vehicles preserved by the Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Preservation Group, the Graham Laurie Paisley Accordion Orchestra, a mobile gym, dog agility displays from The Glennifer Agility Club, live bands, drama, a funfair, 5 a-side football and a large marquee housing information stalls including one with our friend Maggi Boyd, who was there in her Message in a Bottle capacity.



*Anne Dowie ready to empty her purse*

Lesley King and Jeanette began to collect the names of the gang who were available and part of the deal was that Buddy Beat would get a free stall to sell our goods. The venue for the fair was Ferguslie Gardens in Paisley and the event ran from 12 noon to 4pm.



*Ferguslie Gardens*

This was a Buddy Beat milestone in that it was our 50<sup>th</sup> event since we started up, which is pretty incredible when you think about it. Amazing! Roll on the next 50!

The Buddy Beaters were:-

Jane Bentley, Marion Bisland, Alan Borland, Hazel Borland, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie, Mary Graham, Lesley King, Jackie McDowall, Eileen McGrory, Noreen Young.

Hazel and Allan arrived long before everyone else and did a grand job of setting up our stall. Tom quickly added the photos of all our adventures onto Allan's display boards. Allan was proudly displaying his new Buddy Beat sign.



*Lesley, Hazel and Allan- Open all Hours*



*Tom admiring his handy-work*

Ferguslie Gardens sits off a main road but is well hidden, and poor Jane was going round in circles trying to find it.



*Yoo-hoo!*

But, before long she found us and we emptied her beloved Berlingo and set the drums up. A circle of chairs had been set up for us behind the stalls, on a slight hill to the side of the big pond. We stored our bags at our stall in readiness for our 1 o'clock start.

As we waited to start, a chap asked if he could take a break on one of the chairs and he then proceeded to talk to us and after a discussion with Jane he announced that he was a local councillor, and urged us to seek funding from the Local Area Committees. Thanking us for the welcome seat, he quietly donated ten pounds for a beverage fund to Jane for us all. That was a lovely start to the day!



*Marion ready to get going*

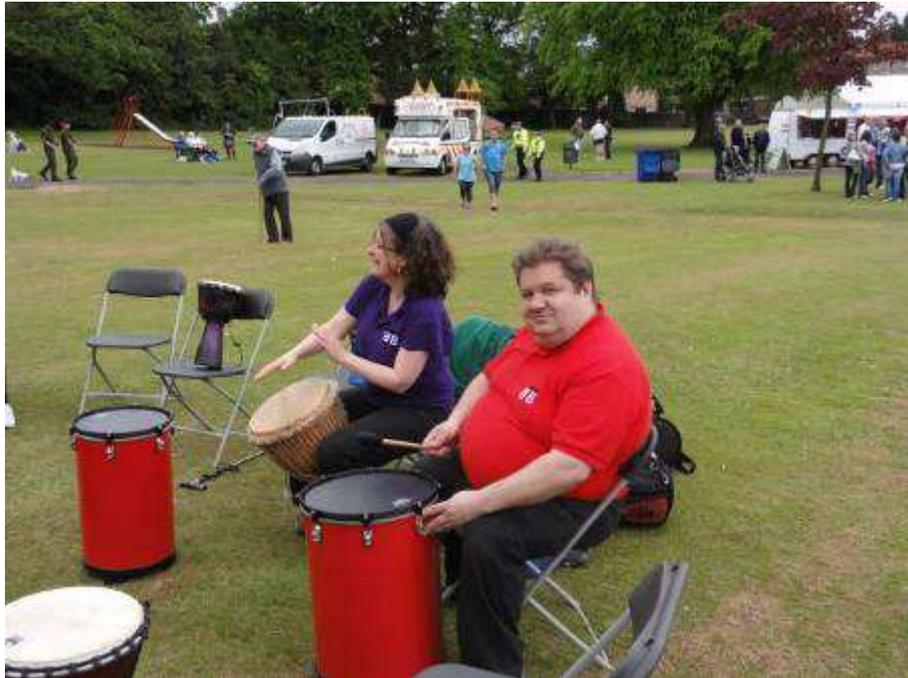


*Mary poised for action*

Joining us in the circle, but not yet ready to play was Mary's mum Nancy. Allan joined us while Hazel manned the stall. We opened with "Where's My Lunch?" which got our energy levels to the right place. Coming up the hill was Councillor Eileen McCartin. Councillor McCartin had officially launched Message in a Bottle earlier in the week and was eager to try out the drums and we jammed for a few moments and she seemed to enjoy herself very much and happily posed for a photo. We took a twenty second breather and Anne Dowie showed her poetic tendencies and made up the following ditty-

*"Get your drum  
And have some fun  
You never know  
You may get a bun!"*

Pam Ayres sure has a rival!



*Allan- "Would Jane notice if I nipped off for an ice-cream?"*



*Councillor Eileen McCartin and Mary*



*Don't tell them it's not Benidorm!*

We were not doing terribly well in convincing people to join us and Mary's mum Nancy did her bit to try and get fresh blood around the circle but she couldn't find anyone willing, so instead she joined the circle and picked out a drum for herself. We played Rhythm Tennis and then slipped into an open jam where a young boy and girl joined in. As we played an elderly couple walked by us and Jane urged them to come and play. They declined but had us laughing when the elderly gentleman began to shimmy in time to the beat! A quick pause and we were joined by a mother and her young daughter and Jane played some Call and Response which went down well. When that had finished the mother got up to go but her daughter intimated that she wasn't finished just yet. We began to free-style and this young girl had us all following her within seconds as she alternated a beat with a hand clap. So impressed was Jane that she promised to take that exercise into our weekly meetings! Then we were joined by a grandmother and granddaughter and Jane played Call and Response once more, finishing in a loud rumble and stop. That was our first half hour over and seeing as we had an hour to our next time slot, we picked up our gear and stored it down at the stall, leaving everyone to walk around and do what they wished.



*Anne D and our Noreen – they've got the X-Factor!*

We had recently been given a twenty pound Tesco gift voucher from a chap at ACUMEN and Tom had gone the day before and bought water, diet coke, biscuits, chocolate bars and a large bag of DISCO crisps which were a big hit with the gang and we nibbled our way through half of it and Hazel will bring the rest to our next meeting.

Tom Anne Dowie and Noreen went for a wander and bumped into Eileen who was carrying a dish of melted chocolate draped over marshmallows. We proceeded to oooh and aaah at her purchase. Eileen said- "They are nice, but perhaps a bit sweet" to which Anne Dowie replied. "That will go well with you seeing you are a bit sour!" Well, how we tittered as Eileen threatened to splat Anne's white jacket with melted chocolate!

The time for the second half hour was approaching so we gathered our gear and made our way back to the circle. Jackie had staked out the chairs for most of the hour and told us that the organisers had tried to whip them away but they hadn't reckoned it was Jackie McDowall they were dealing with. Go get em, Jackie!



*Jackie- "You take the chairs, I breaka your fingers!"*

If the first period had been slow to get people involved, then the second was the polar opposite with plenty of keen people hovering around our circle. Hazel got a break from the stall and Lesley took over shopkeeper duties. The pipe band stood up the hill from us and we waited for their spot to conclude and we ended up drumming in time with their last tune. We were then back on and from the start we had 6 people, four of whom were young children and we free-styled for a short time until Jane had firstly the girls playing only and then switched to the boys. The kids were having a ball and Jane launched into a bug rumble and then a Call and Response game. We were joined by a husband and wife and their very young baby Thomas and at one point he was brought out of his pram and his father helped him dance on a drum. Next, she split us into halves and then brought us back together finishing in an almighty sound!



*Which of these 5 Buddy Beaters looks like the most trouble?*

Everyone really enjoyed themselves and we shook our fingers out. Four teenagers walked up the hill towards us, three of which were determined to play. We jammed fast and furiously and then Jane took the level down and two of the small children seemed to enjoy playing a beat and picking out someone across the circle to do the same. We were surprised to see Jeanette arrive and she joined us for the final moments (she too couldn't find Paisley's hidden gem). Jane informed us we had two minutes to find an

ending to our music and as the deadline approached, Jane and the gang built up a mighty rumble. The young boy, surely just 2 years old, saw his drum tumble and as he tried to gather it up we were still holding the beat, and we laughed as his mum helped him get the drum upright, enabling everyone to finish together on a heartbeat. Magic!



*Jane and an avid learner*

Whew! What a Buddy Beat week that was- firstly on Monday we had the launch of Message in a Bottle and also Maggi Boyd's Quest for a Choir. On Thursday at The Arts Centre a photographer and reporter came from The Paisley Express as they wanted to run a feature on us and they took group and individual photos and chatted to some of the old hands, creating a lot of excitement.

And then this West End Fair where we played for an hour in the open air, meeting lots of people, made some new friends and met some old friends and had fun in the sun. Hazel, Allan and Lesley did well on the stall and we thank them for their hard work.

Another fine day out for the gang!



*Anne Dowie- there was clearly far too much excitement for her.*



*Noreen- “Anne, I’m not so sure about this new mobile phone of yours!”*

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers