

18th September 2010

Bipolar Scotland Annual Conference

Menzies Hotel, Glasgow



She moves like the wind...

Last September The Bipolar Fellowship of Scotland invited The Buddy Beat along to their annual conference in Perth to play and hold a workshop. This was a great day out for everyone and we went down so well that we were invited back this year.

The venue for this year was switched to Glasgow, which made things easier for everyone to get to. The Menzies Hotel was the venue and our Hazel took control, contacting Alison Cairns, Chief Executive of The Bipolar Scotland organisation, to sort out what was required and then went about getting together a list of willing BB members. This year we were asked to hold a 15 minute energiser session from 10.45am, and we were permitted to have our stall and that was too good an opportunity to pass up.



The Menzies Hotel, Glasgow

Also, the Buddy Beat film process began today after weeks of work by film-maker James Cairns and Tom, and Alison Cairns who is no relation to James, by the way, kindly granted permission for this to take place during the conference.

Hazel and Allan got there early to set up the stall as did James to set up his equipment. Jane soon followed in her Beloved Berlingo while Tom met Jess at Paisley Gilmour Street to catch an early train. Next up Sarah arrived, having made her own way and lastly Eileen and Jackie utilised the Christine Robertson BB Taxi Service, with all three sleeping in late, so they arrived a tad flustered but soon calmed with a cuppa and a bacon roll. Lastly, relatively new Buddy Beater Alex Boyd arrived just in time for BB's performance, but he wanted to sit in the audience and soak up the atmosphere which was just fine.

The Buddy Beat were:-

- ✓ Jane Bentley
- ✓ Hazel Borland
- ✓ Allan Borland
- ✓ Alex Boyd
- ✓ Tom Chalmers
- ✓ Eileen McGrory
- ✓ Jackie McDowall
- ✓ Jess McMillan
- ✓ Christine Robertson
- ✓ Sarah Van Der Molen



A Box of Oranges- Jess, Tom & Sarah

The conference room was on the first floor. James busied himself setting up, while conference attendee David Wright from ACUMEN (Honorary Buddy Beat member) became part time roadie and helped Jane upstairs with the drums. Then Sarah, Tom and Jess quickly set out Boomwhackers underneath every chair before the conference began. At the same time, Hazel and Allan were outside the conference room, busily setting out our stall. A great surprise was to see cartoonist Graham Ogilvie who Buddy Beat met in June at the Gonnae No Dae That Conference in Kirkcaldy where Graham drew and coloured a great picture of ourselves. We said our hellos and it would seem that our paths may cross in other future events.

The attendees filed in and the Bipolar Scotland AGM began at 10am and part of this was the adoption of the name and emblem change from Bipolar Fellowship of Scotland to Bipolar Scotland and this free time allowed Buddy Beat members to retreat to the reception area for a cuppa and chat.

The group reconvened outside the room around 10.45 and Jane decided to alter our programme to begin with a minute or two of freestyle as a change to “Funky Lunch”.



A Council of War- the Team discuss tactics

At 11.00 am we were announced by Alison Cairns and we filed in to the front of the room. Many of the people there had experienced Buddy Beat last year and seemed to be looking forward to our energising session. Jane said a few words of introduction telling everyone that they had Boomwhackers beneath their chairs. Some had already discovered this and waved their whackers expectantly, and Jane convinced them to wait a few moments while Buddy Beat played. Jane counted us in and we free styled, with Jane dictating if we played soft or loud and instructing neat stops and quick restarts then instigated Call and Response, challenging us to 8 or so different beats and we ended on a powerful rumble, receiving a

lovely and appreciative round of applause! Jane then stepped to the front desk and you could tell that the gathering was ready for action. The room was neatly set out in groups of Boomwhacker colours with green at the front, followed by orange then red, with yellow next and purple bringing up the rear. Each colour was then instructed on a beat and given a few seconds to practice and soon every section was playing together and the room was filled with smiling faces and great sounds. Jane gave them a break for a few seconds and then asked Buddy Beat for a beat in the background.



Get Ready to Rhumble!

The Boomwhackers were brought back in and the room bristled with energy. There is always someone in Buddy Beat's view who really gets it, and today it was Pru Davies, a Director of Bipolar Scotland. Pru lapped it all up, really getting into the swing of things and her smile beamed back at us. Sitting near the back in the Yellow section was David Wright. Although quite far back in the ranks, he was still in our radar and he was seen to be having a cracking time! Jane alternated switching between drums and Boomwhackers, making the time shorter and this cheeky exercise certainly raised some laughs and then we ended on great rhumble! Excellent!



James in action



Who knew plastic could be so much fun?



Pru Davies (in purple) having a ball

Alison Cairns took to the floor and asked the conference to show their appreciation once more and we graciously filed out of the room with our drums. Some of the group- Jess, Sarah, Eileen, Jackie (who is a paid up member of Bipolar Scotland and an official attendee) and Christine chose to go back inside and follow the next events, first of which was a speaker William Lyons, journalist with The Wall Street Journal who relayed his experiences and difficulties in living with his wife's bipolar and he was followed by a talk from Alan Douglas and Aileen Bell, both from Bipolar Scotland, on Self Help Groups, and both were well received, interesting and informative.

Meanwhile Jane, Tom, Hazel and Allan with the help of Alex packed the gear away. Jane wanted the drums and gear back in her van and James, who needed footage of us entering the hotel for slotting into the film, came outside with us. Quite what the locals thought of Tom, Jane, Allan, Hazel and Alex lugging bags of equipment out of the building only to return two minutes later we will never know!

Back inside, Jess was first to hit the road, followed by Christine who was rushing back home to save her husband from grandkids. Jane departed a little later telling us she was going into town for some retail therapy and maybe a movie. Lucky Jane! Lunchtime broke around 12.30 and Sarah, Eileen and Jackie went for some nosh, while Hazel, Allan and Tom remained with the stall. Cartoonist Graham Ogilvie drew us brilliantly once again but also added a terrific second, saying that Jane's words had inspired this picture (See below).



Graham did us proud once again



this is the cartoon Jane inspired

Several people were interested in the stall and photos of our adventures. Everyone was so interested and friendly and Buddy Beat didn't do too badly at all on the sales front. One woman told us that we had been "Excellent" while another said "Superb-yet again!" Jane was also paid a lovely compliment when a lady told her that she looked as though she was really enjoying herself when she was leading the energiser session.



Goodies galore!

As the afternoon workshops began we packed up the stall. They included Universal Comedy, Welfare Reform-Which Way Now, Tai Chi and Self Help Groups- Do They Work?

That was yet another good day out for the gang and did everyone good. Gordon Johnston, a director of Bipolar Scotland emailed and said "Thanks to you all for coming along - an excellent start to our conference" and Pru Davies emailed and commented "I really enjoyed myself - it's so good to catch up with Buddy Beat again - I will certainly recommend you to other organisations that I'm involved with. Some time I will try and get along to one of your rehearsal nights in Paisley. All the best." Both comments are greatly appreciated.

Sarah texted Tom later to say that four green Boomwhackers had been found in the conference room making a determined bid for freedom. These were kindly rounded up and cared for over the weekend by David Wright, but little does he know that Boomwhackers are a tad like Gremlins. One drop of water, and they reproduce at a horrendous rate! Be careful, David!



*Eileen (in red)-
"Now listen and learn ladies, I am only going to say this once-
This is how you do the Birdie Dance!"*

Words by Tom Chalmers