

The Buddy beat



Buddy Beat is a drumming group based in the Life Church in Stock Street, Paisley for adults who have mental health issues and was born from a musical social inclusion project at Dykebar Hospital, created by Lead Occupational Therapist Jeanette Allan, and Community Musician Dr Jane Bentley.

Come and join in a drumming workshop at the Charleston Centre on:

1. Wednesday 20th March 2013, 7-9pm
2. Wednesday 27th March 2013, 7-9pm

No prior drumming experience required

ALL ACTIVE CLIENTS WELCOME

Please see RAMH ACTIVE STAFF for more details

RAMH
recovery across mental health

March 2013 has seen The Buddy Beat begin its year-long outreach work program, kindly funded by National Lottery Awards for All. On March 21st we had a great time at Elderslie Village Hall as part of the week long Agefest activities.

We also held two musical workshops, one either side of our time in Elderslie and both of these were for RAMH ACTIVE (Recovery Across Mental Health: see www.ramh.org)

Dr Jane Bentley contacted Buddy Beat's great friend and tireless supporter Reuben Millward, Education & Information Worker at RAMH, to offer workshops. Reuben jumped at Jane's offer and so a series of two musical workshops were set up for two consecutive Wednesdays on March 20th and 27th at The Charleston Centre in Paisley, just yards from Buddy Beat's home. See the front page for Reuben's great poster.

Reuben memorably collaborated with Buddy Beat twice in 2012- he is a drummer with a fabulous ceilidh band and he brought his entire kit to one of our regular weekly meetings and let us all have a go. It proved to be a memorable experience for many of us. The second time was during the Renfrewshire Mental Health & Arts Festival in October when we held "The Big Drum" in Paisley Town Hall. That was a rocking drumming session that saw members of the public join up with Buddy Beat on djembe, joined by our drumming friends Drumdee from Dundee and Reuben on his drum kit. Check out The Big Drum on Youtube.

It's always good to know something of the group or organisation that we hold a workshop for and Reuben was kind enough to provide a little background.

"ACTIVE is based at The Charleston Centre in Paisley. ACTIVE is a strong, established community mental health support service. We offer a wide range of support from informal social groups and clubs to more focused activities and therapeutic groups, some of which take place in local venues in the community including Paisley, Renfrew, Johnstone and Glenburn.

ACTIVE's long standing experience in mental health means we are the first stop for information and education, as well as having a detailed knowledge

of other community services and can signpost people to the most appropriate support.

Whilst our approach is relaxed and informal, all enquiries are dealt with in a confidential and professional manner. We provide a wide range of support including:

- The Hub (Venue) at the Charleston centre. This includes: Information groups, health and well-being groups, creative groups and book and writing groups.*
- Link Club social support groups in various locations in Renfrewshire.*
- Health & Well-being group.*
- Craft Cafe.*
- A welcome group.*
- Evening & weekend groups.*
- Stress management.*
- A monthly carers group with the Community Development Service and The Renfrewshire Carers Centre.*
- Smoking cessation group.*

A range of leisure and recreational groups including:

- Walking Group*
- Women's group*
- Football (Paisley Lions)*
- Gardening group*
- Physical activity groups (Cycling)*

My service as RAMH Education & Information Officer has a wide remit involving linking in with community based groups like the Buddy Beat and getting involved with the Mental Health Arts and Film Festival to promote recovery through the arts and meaningful activity etc.”

And so The Buddy Beat were-

Dr Jane Bentley, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie,

Eileen McGrory, Christine Robertson

It was a cold night in Paisley on March 20th, but some brave souls made their way to The Charleston Centre. From ACTIVE we had Eileen, Patrice, Jim 1 and Jim 2. (With two Eileen's & two Jims in the room we all had a good chance of getting the names right!).

Eileen introduced herself and was looking forward to starting. Patrice was clearly eager too, and Reuben explained that she has played the djembe with him recently. Jim 1 told us he had wolfed down a sausage supper to get there, and it was clear he was a natural comedian. Jim 2 is actually a Buddy Beat member and it appeared that he was there with his ACTIVE hat on.

Quick Anne, smile!



Once we were all seated and comfortable, Reuben kicked things off by introducing himself, and then gave us an insight into ACTIVE. He then spoke of his admiration of The Buddy Beat. He thanked us all for coming out on such a night and then handed over to Jane who gave a little potted Buddy Beat history before asking the Buddy Beat members to say something about themselves. Tom was first up- it tends to happen when you sit beside Dr Bentley! - And he said that he had now been part of the group for five years and keeps returning for the friendship and music.

Tom stated that Buddy Beat somehow found him at the right time in 2008, in the very same building that they were all sitting in. Anne then informed the circle that she had been in Buddy Beat since the beginning in September 2007, adding that it helps her in so many positive ways, the most important one being that it has kept her out of hospital. Anne also said that because of Buddy Beat she had the courage to take up drama. Eileen said that she joined Buddy Beat in March 2009 and how it has helped her self-confidence. Eileen added that it was the sense of family that kept her returning and that she particularly enjoyed being out and about with Buddy Beat. Lastly, Christine said that it was not just the music that made Buddy Beat special, it was also the friendship and caring for one another.



*Tom with The Lady in Red,
or Eileen*

It was then time to kick the music off and Eileen gave a quick “How to Hold & Play a Djembe” before suggesting that we play a favourite Buddy Beat game. Eileen selected Bop Around which is a three tiered game where we send a single beat around the circle. It becomes more complex when someone decides to change the direction of the beat, and it always provides faces full of concentration and bursts of hilarity in equal measure. It is also a good ice-breaker and helps everyone relax. We saw smiling faces all around, none more so than Reuben who was tickled pink by the whole shenanigans!

Jane invited another of The Buddy Beat to choose an activity and Anne selected Echo & Response. This is good for people trying the drums for the first time as it provides ideas for short rhythms to use later. It also gives people the chance to try something themselves- we have seen it countless times when someone looks slightly terrified as their turn approaches but invariably they pull it off, with triumphant smiles the result. Anne started off with four examples which we all repeated and we took our turns and it worked a treat.

Jane informed everyone that after all these exercises it was now time to bring everything together in a five minute musical jam. We took off and ripped along with a strong and determined rhythm. It quietened down after a few minutes and you could hear musical conversations across the circle. Toes were tapping and it was great to be part of it. Jane brought it to a close and announced that it was tea-break time. Well-earned for sure!



We are the gang, the gang to entertain you!

On the restart Christine requested building the music up by joining in one by one. Jane started off and Tom then joined in, finding a beat that fitted Jane's. Anne was next and then Eileen joined in and so on until the circle was reverberating with a strong sound. You can hear the different sounds melding together and it is very relaxing at the same time. Jane let us play along as a group and then dropped out, as we all did one by one and it was left to Reuben to finish it off rather splendidly. That exercise seemed to resonate and when Jane suggested another person start the next round, Reuben looked to be bursting to start things off. The music rallied along and as we dropped out one by one, it was Buddy Beat Eileen's turn to stop playing but she somehow didn't get the memo and kept drumming. Of course, this meant that Anne, Tom and Jane couldn't stop. As we were forced to keep going, Anne was thinking her hands were about to fall off; Tom was trying to send telepathic messages to Eileen and Jane pulled all sorts of faces as she tried to instruct Eileen non-verbally. My, how we laughed when it finally came to an end! One thing for sure is that if you repeat this exercise with another person starting off, you will always hear a very different sound. This is a Buddy Beat favourite and we never tire of it.

With the clock ticking, Tom suggested a game of Freeze -Go which always gets everyone buzzing. The circle plays until someone shouts "Freeze!" The group cannot restart until a different person shouts "Go!" You can shake thing up by decreasing the time intervals between commands and with everyone jamming away you have to make sure that you are heard above the beat. Stage two of this game opens the field up and you can throw in "Play the centre of your drums" or "Play just the edge" or "Play loudly/quietly". Whatever takes your fancy, just throw it in there! It really is energetic & fun to play and it was a good way to end the session.

ACTIVE Eileen told us that she really enjoyed it, never having played a djembe before. It was a very enjoyable evening for everyone in Buddy Beat and hopefully the same people will return next week for the 2nd workshop, with maybe a friend or two also. It was certainly a great and rewarding way to launch our 2013 Outreach programme.



The 2nd workshop on March 27th was attended by 7 new faces, yet again another brave bunch on a cold and nippy Wednesday night. Jane put them through their paces as she had done the week before, also giving people the chance to play the melodic Hang and was ably assisted by Buddy Beat's Eileen and Christine.

Jane reported that, as is the norm at these things, most people are quiet and subdued at the beginning, but by the end of two hours of drumming exercises and games, with a good doze of fun and laughter mixed in, the new drummers were energised and buzzing. In both workshops, Jane issued an open invite to everyone to come and join Buddy Beat on a Thursday mornings. We are always open and welcoming to visitors. One lady told Jane, "I've had a delightful evening!" This just goes to show:

The Buddy Beat- it does what it says on the tin





“There’s no business like show-business, Eileen!”

Words by Tom Chalmers

Pictures by Tom Chalmers & Jane Bentley

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