



Flexi-Care Friends

As far as events/workshops go, Buddy Beat had been approached last year by a local organisation called Flexi-Care with a view to booking Jane for possible drum activities for their numerous groups. Flexicare offer support for boys with autism and Asbergers and also for adults with learning difficulties and run a number of clubs all year round in all corners of Renfrewshire. Jane held three workshops last year for Flexi-Care which went down a treat, and some members of Buddy Beat attended to lend a hand. This lead to Jane getting a bumper booking for 7 night-time workshops spread over February and March, and this is what happened.....

The Anchor Gang- 16th February

The first came on February 16th and was held at the Anchor Centre in Paisley for The Anchor Gang, a club that meets once a week for young boys with autism and runs from 6.30-8.30

The Buddy Beaters were- Jane Bentley, Tom Chalmers and Jess McMillan.

There are 6 boys in The Anchor Club- Steven, Lewis, Daniel, Angus, Ayaz and Aziz and they had 5 young carers/volunteers. The Club had a quick get together at the start before joining us for drumming. Jane asked the first boy, Daniel what his name was and with a little background drumbeat, she sang his name and welcomed him to the workshop. Jane then went around all the boys and they seemed to like this special treatment. Perhaps Jane should do that for us all every Thursday morning!

With introductions over, Jane invited the boys and staff to pick a drum. Jane has been very busy and productive of recent and had with her five newly purchased drums, all beautifully coloured and styled. That created excitement and once everyone had settled back down Jane began by showing the boys basic rhythms. The noise was too much for one of the boys, Steven and he sadly left the room. Jane then started a game of copycat, and the Club responded well to that and Jess took up the mantle next, and was then followed by Tom as it worked around the circle. The boys looked delighted to get the chance to make up their own little beat and revelled when they heard it played back to them. One of the boys, Daniel, quietly and politely asked if he could take one of the drums home with him! Next, Jane played a short beat and then pointed to someone else in the circle to take up the mantle and this seemed to delight and excite the boys.

Jane then brought out the Hang which brought out some “oohs” and “aahs”. Jane gave a quick demonstration and the lulling sounds seemed to sooth everyone around the circle.

Then Angus and Lewis moved out the room to vent their energies on some other activity, leaving Daniel, Ayaz and Aziz. Jane asked the three of them if they would like to get down on the floor with her and play the Hang which they loved. Still using the hang and including the drums, Jane began a story telling exercise. This lasted a full ten minutes and Jane began with heavy and slow beats on the drums, saying that “There once was an elephant that was walking through the jungle and who did he meet?” Daniel shot his hand up and said “A Power Ranger!” which caused a few

giggles and we then created this story of the elephant and Power Ranger in the jungle. Daniel wanted them to meet a UFO and if the Hang resembles nothing else it is surely a flying saucer. The UFO came down and the aliens played their lovely tunes for the elephant and Power Ranger!

And with imaginations somewhat exhausted we broke for brain food and munched crisps and slurped juice. The boys mainly wanted to play in their gym area after that, and the second half of the workshop took on a new twist, for it began with just Daniel, a carer and Buddy Beat.

So taken with story-telling, Daniel wanted more and we were suddenly in the Wild West with tiny cowboys and giant cowboys with a supporting cast of Skinny Bob and One Eyed Jess (with only Tom and Jess in attendance, it ain't difficult to work out which one was which!). After that Daniel created another tale where a bear met a UFO and it was full of alien bears that had come to visit. So after 15 minutes, a satisfied Daniel bowed out and Ayaz came back into the room. We drummed together and Jane introduced the Stick of Power and Ayaz was quickly conducting us, making us louder and softer in turn. He seemed to like this control over us and was smiling all over and his carer Kerry was eager to try too. After that, we drummed some more and Ayaz suddenly had 4 drums around him, and with Jane's help, was soon playing them all. He was then renamed "Four Drum Ayaz." Lastly, Ayaz wanted to make up his own story and using two of Jane's drumsticks, he created a man with long legs and bulbous feet who couldn't help but fall of cliff edges (the drums).

We finished up a little earlier than expected but it had been good fun and once again different from anything before. The boys seemed to enjoy themselves, particularly Daniel and Ayaz and Daniel was very keen that we returned for more drumming the following week!



Princess Jane



One Eyed Jess



Skinny Bob

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

The Linwood Action Group- 17th February

Just twenty four hours after the last Flexi-Care event and on 17th February, Jane and the gang were back on the road. This workshop had been scheduled for two weeks before, but Jane had double booked herself and this was a hastily rearranged date, and consequently the gang came on board late in the day. That's the thing about Buddy Beat- you can't keep us down for long.

The Buddy Beaters were-

Jane Bentley, Tom Chalmers, Mary Graham,
Lesley King and Jess McMillan.



Jess, Lesley, Jane and Mary- The Spice Girls

This workshop was held in Linwood at the Linwood Community Centre and it was Flexi-Care's Linwood Action Group, a regular club of adults with learning difficulties. We turned up before 7pm to meet the club and set out the music circle. As is common at these types of events, many of the members came up and introduced themselves and helped us set up. One lady was Rachel who had a bubbly character, and Christopher, who had been one of the Dizzy Feet dancers at Paisley Town Hall at the end of last October when we played at the Renfrewshire Disability Art Forum's relaunch event.

Once seated, it was 7.15 and there were 22 eager and expectant eyes on us. Jane began with introducing herself and then the rest of us, which produced a loud chorus of "hellos" from all around. Then we played for a couple of minutes just to show everyone what it is we do. This went down very well and Jane went straight into a

Boomwhacker session. We handed out the whackers, making sure the colours were grouped together. Jane began with getting everyone to tap the whackers and the sound filled the hall, bring whoops and giggles with it. Jane then took us through the volume range, from very loud to churchmouse quiet. Then Jane taught everyone to stop and start on her command, and having learned the simple rules of Boomwhackers, Jane asked if anyone would like a turn at conducting. Several eager beaver hands shot into the air and first up we had Lynne, then Karen and Rachel before the boys got their turn when Christopher and William stepped up and they all seemed to like being in charge and the group quickly became very able at following commands.

From there, Jane then introduced the percussion instruments which brought oohs and aahs from the gathering. Jane then invited everyone to step into the middle and choose the instrument of their choice and it was suddenly all hands on deck as everything was rapidly snapped up. We showed the group how to rumble and stop and then Jane decided to stage a boys versus girls jamming session. The girls went first and were naturally louder, for they easily outnumbered the boys. But when the boys got their turn they gave as good as they could. Jane repeated this once more and everyone seemed to enjoy it. Then the group were given the chance to swap their instruments which most of them did. Jane introduced her Stick of Power and played her “Point and Play” game. Everyone had their own 5 seconds in the limelight with this and they all did very well. When Tom got his chance he scraped his fingernail across and around his drum and ended with a plop in the middle and this brought a great and funny chorus of “Whooooooooo!”

To close the first half, Mary played her violin. Firstly she gave us a stirring “Lord of The Dance” and followed that up with a couple of reels and the group joined in with their drums and clapping. Mary received a well deserved and hearty round of applause.



After juice and a bun, and a chance to mingle with some of the group, we got back to the music at 8.15. Jane started with a copycat round and she played three or four rhythms herself to give everyone the idea of the exercise and then each person around

the circle took it in turn to dictate what we all played and the look on some of their faces when they heard their beat being played on masse was lovely to see. Next up Jane played the game where everyone who wore blue played and this then swapped to black, purple, whoever liked porridge and other types of foods. We then returned to Point and Play and when Jane asked if anyone would like to stand in the centre and point her Stick of Power, there were no shortage of volunteers. Most potent was Rodney who revelled in the power and had us all a tad scared as he pointed with such strength and power we were afraid the stick would fly out of his grasp and smack someone in the face! He got such a round of applause that he took to the floor for an encore!

Jane then got us all jamming, taking us loud and soft, up and down, backwards and forwards and finished with a roof-busting rumble!

To end the evening, Jane brought out The Hang and invited three of the group to come up. They each were given a drumstick to play The Hang and Jane let them play and then counted them out, whereupon they would turn to someone else in the circle and pass the drumstick to them for the next turn. We did this until everyone had had a turn and funniest was when Pamela had completed her turn, she crossed the circle and gave the drumstick to one of the boys, and also kissed him on the cheek. Well, that produced a crescendo of comments, oohs and aahs and we all laughed.

Christopher then stood up at the end and thanked Buddy Beat for coming and giving them such a great time. We all stood up and took a bow before Jane returned the compliment and we gave the group a round of applause for making our evening hugely enjoyable.

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

The Highlife Group- 18th February

Buddy Beat events are a bit like waiting for buses- you have nothing for ages and then three come along in the space of 3 days.

Flexi-Care's The Highlife Group is for young adults, living in Renfrewshire aged 18 to 25 year olds who have a learning disability and /or an autism spectrum disorder. The group runs every Thursday evening and Jane went along on February 19th to run another workshop. The Buddy Beat gang were otherwise engaged and unable to attend, except for our Christine who went along and lent her support and Jane said she "did grand!" and that it was a great and very lively group!



Lady Jane

And here are Christine's words on that workshop-

"Jane and I had a happy time at The Anchor Centre with the Special Needs Youth Club on Thurs 18th Feb '10.

There were about 15 of us including leaders and volunteer students. This was a new venue and situation for me and I was extremely interested in how Jane introduced the drums and percussion to this new audience - especially as we may be taking her role in part, in the future.

We played a few games involving beats and gradually introduced one drum. Even the reluctant participants forgot inhibitions and by the second session were keen for more. My regret was that I only remembered my camera when it was too late. The delight and intensity on most faces is only recorded in my memory. We will be back I gather so forewarned will be forearmed."



Christine

Words by Christine Robertson

The Clubbers- 22nd February



Lesley and Jane

Another Monday night at the Anchor Centre- I could get quite used to this as it is really good fun and very fulfilling.

We were playing along with “The Clubbers” who are a group of 18-26 year olds with Asbergers.

The intrepid Beaters Jane, Tom, Jackie and Lesley were warmly greeted by “The Clubbers” who consisted of three leaders- Lorraine, Elaine and Richard along with Ross, Joanna, Gillian, Gemma, Craig, Colin and Neil.

I must say it was very good to see so many girls joining in as in the past it has been loaded with the boys.

We started with Call and Response, and then a drum was passed around and we made our introductions. All too soon we were to see there was a joker in the pack- Neil- and there were laughs all around.

The Boomwhackers were then brought out and as usual, a great time was had by all. We split into colours and played different beats and joined together to play a tune. We then played louder and quieter and then had a jam with them.



Jackie and Tom- whatever Jackie is on, we all want a bottle!

Everyone was then encouraged to pick up a drum and after a quick demonstration, a fantastic jam followed. Neil took great delight in playing very loudly and his partner in crime, Colin, kept playing an extra beat. We then had a well earned break but Neil wanted to carry on with the music and started to play his Banjo- I could have listened to him for the rest of the evening as he was really expert at this.

After the break we all returned to the room to play some more and we had a game of Rhumble Tennis. There was a lot of laughter at this and every one enjoyed themselves although we got a bit muddled but this is half the fun in that we can laugh at ourselves.

Joanna really came out of her shell and was really good at this.

The “Mystery” item was next on the agenda – it was “The Hang”. Neil decided it was a space-ship and Colin decided it sounded Chinese. Everyone was keen to play The Hang and as always, it sounded fantastic.

Next came everyone’s turn to conduct and we also played “Freeze and Start” which went down really well.

All too soon it was time to pack up. Another very successful evening with lots of laughter and was enjoyed by one and all.



“Oooh, Baby Love, my Baby Love, I need you my Baby Love....”

Words by Lesley King.
Photos by Tom Chalmers

Paisley Action Group March 2nd

The very next night after our WRVS success, Jane’s busy drumming world continued with her latest Flexi-Care booking. So, On March 2nd, we went to St Catherine’s Primary in Paisley’s Gallowhill. We had been there before on October 2009 for Jane’s 1st Flexi-Care booking, when we held a workshop for half a dozen or so teenage boys with Asbergers.

Paisley Action Group is another club for adults with learning difficulties and it was a healthy turnout with 24 members and carers. From the start you could tell that they were eager beavers and were raring to go.

The Buddy Beat were-



Jane Bentley- She's Got the Whole World in Her Hands



Tom Chalmers



Jess McMillan

We placed all the drums in the centre of the large circle and Jane quickly introduced herself and Tom and Jess too. As normal, we gave a short demonstration on drumming, showing the group how it is done with a pinch of stopping and starting and this went down very well. Jane then produced her famous inflatable globe and used this to get to know everyone. It was thrown across the circle to someone and when they caught it they would say their name out loud before launching the globe to someone else. Jane then took her drum and demonstrated how to hold it and how to get the different tones from the skin. Next, she went around the circle, allowing everyone to bang on the drum while telling everyone something that they liked whether it was a colour, or a sport or food and this created a certain buzz of excitement.

The group were waiting for the word to get stuck into the drums, but Jane kept them waiting by introducing everyone to the Boomwhackers. There was enough for two

Boomwhackers each and Tom and Jess handed them around the circle. Jane began with starting and stopping and then asked Tom to lead the group. He did this a few times and then Jess had a go too, and the group quickly got rather slick at it. When Jane asked if anyone in the circle wanted to be the leader, there was more than one volunteer and we had firstly Marcia, then Fraser and finally Gordon, who sat beside Jess all during the workshop and they quickly became friends. Jane then regained control and took it to the next stage showing the group how to instruct a circle in how to play loud and soft. When again the question was asked for volunteers we had Iain, Marcia a second time, Tom's new friend David and Gordon again. This went down a treat and Jane then threw down the gauntlet- men versus the women! Jane led the women for a short spell and the men were very supportive in their boos and catcalls! Tom then took charge of the men and the women showed how good they were at rubbishing our efforts! When the hilarity settled back down, Jane informed the group it was time to get drumming.

Jane firstly demonstrated the shakers, tambourines and frogs. When Jane gave the word they attacked on mass, having clearly spied out which drum or percussion piece they fancied most. We jammed for a minute and then Jane once again challenged the sexes with Tom taking charge of the boys and Jess with the girls and this was received in the same supportive vein as the Boomwhacker Challenge. Jane then split the group into two, having one half play and one half silent before having a noisy two minute jam before breaking for a well earned tea-break. Tom had been sitting beside group member David, who seemed to know everything about the group and was an invaluable source in name supplying, got off his seat and his foot was caught in the strap. Tom's drum keeled sideways and hit David on the leg. He turned to Jess and uttered "I came here to have fun, not to get injured!" and impish Jess suggested that he should sue Tom!

Suitably fed and watered during a twenty minute break, Jane began the second half by holding a short copycat session, demonstrating a good half dozen or so rhythms. Jane then asked Tom to hold The Stick of Power and he used this to pick one of the group at a time to play whatever they wanted and then everyone would copycat it. This lasted a good ten minutes with such a big group and the room was filled with raised hands and "Me! Me!" when The Stick of Power was doing its magic. When we thought that everyone had had a go, on- the -ball David announced that two of the carers hadn't had their chance, and we soon remedied that.

Jane then surprised Tom and Jess by taking a break from the drums and initiating group singing. She sang a line at a time of an African tribal chant called "Oleo!" and after a few moments, the group were happily singing along and drumming at the same time. That was a lovely break from the norm.

To close Jane then split the circle into two halves once more. This time the half that wasn't playing were to get up and dance and the group embraced that to the max, particularly Peter, who had earlier told Tom and Jess that he was 52 this year, had just become an uncle and told and showed us his impressive dance moves.. We then swapped over and the other half got their chance to strut their stuff.

One of the carers stood up and thanked Jane for coming along and in a neat touch then thanked Tom and Jess too. The group had clearly enjoyed themselves and some of

them were happy to help us pack things away and as we left we were thanked by many of them.

That was an excellent Buddy Beat night out, and we all went home for a well earned rest!

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

Erskine Action Group- March 9th

Next up in the Flexi-care assembly line of events was a trip to Erskine to hold a workshop for the Erskine Action Group, another club for adults with learning difficulties. The group meet in The St. John Bosco Primary School in the town.

Tom picked up Lesley and then vroomed to Inchinnan to meet Jess and they bravely entered The Land of Endless Roundabouts that is otherwise known as Erskine. That

proved troublesome and they drove around for a while before finding the school tucked away. Jane too had problems finding the school but as soon as she arrived we quickly unloaded the Berlingo and ventured inside.

The Buddy Beaters were-

Jane Bentley, Tom Chalmers, Lesley King and Jess McMillan



Three dedicated followers of fashion

We set up in what looked like a staff room, just off the main assembly hall and Tom eyed up the comfy looking soft chairs. We were joined by 17 group members one of whom was Mark and he said at the beginning that he had seen us on October 29th last year when we played at the Renfrewshire Disability Arts Forum relaunch, and he had been one of the Dizzy Feet dancers.

Jane wasted no time and introduced herself and then the rest of Buddy Beat and we performed for a minute, strutting our stuff.

Firstly, out came the inflatable globe and that went down very well as everyone was encouraged to announce who they were. We then handed out the Boomwhackers and instantly everyone was whacking away, smiling faces all around. Jane got the group to stop and start by counting in and counting out to four on her command and then suggested that anyone in the group could do the same. Lesley was the first and she led the way and that encouraged carer Alex, Caroline and Mark to do likewise. From there Jane got the ladies to play on their own and then the gents. This raised comparisons between the sexes and this was repeated with Jane once again leading the girls and Tom taking charge of the boys (who were miles better!). Jane ended this part of the workshop by starting the group playing loudly and then taking them down to church mice quietness before exploding back to a powerful stop.

Then Jane demonstrated the drums and the percussion instruments and as usual the frogs brought a few sighs and aaahs. When Jane gave the word, the group grabbed what they had previously been eying up, and unusually the majority of the gathering selected percussion and left five or six drums sitting in the centre. Jane began with a jamming session and after a few minutes quietened the percussion so that it was only

the drums that could be heard and vice-versa. Then Jane asked for just the percussion to play and she led them through loud to soft and back to loud and counted them to a stop, which was rather impressive in its togetherness.

Next up, The Stick of Power came out and Jane used this to pick out each and every one around the circle, giving them a few seconds on their own to make up a rhythm. Jess was first to be selected, then Tom and finally Lesley and this showed everyone what kind of beat they could do. This went down very well and some great rhythms appeared- Kirsty, who had one arm in a sling showed great style as did John who sat beside Jess and Mark, who sounded as though he played castanets all the time. The quietest and most withdrawn person in the group was a lady called Kathleen, who had sat cuddling a shaker without taking part. Jane knelt in front of her and gently coaxed her into moving her shaker and then she successfully got Kathleen to echo her own shaker. That was a very touching moment. Once everyone had had a go, Jane built it all up into a big jam before splitting the group into two- each half took it in turns to either play or be an appreciative audience and we ended the first half with a crashing rumble!



During that first half hour or so, there had been a young man called Douglas and he sat beside Jane, but didn't really want to take part, claiming that the Boomwhackers and drums had hurt his hands. During the tea-break he sat with us and told us all about his job in the Erskine Bridge Hotel on a Friday. This must have recharged him somewhat for he came out for the second half all guns blazing!

Douglas was sporting a Queen t-shirt, and Jane started with everyone playing that strong riff from We Will Rock You and this pleased Douglas no end and he was soon singing out loud. Then we all played together, just feeling the music and letting it flow. Jane then instigated a Play and Point game and everyone had their turn, but it was Douglas who approached it with gusto and his rhythms certainly filled the room. After that we played Copy Cat and it moved around the circle and Jane closed the evening with a storytelling game. Weaving this story (with the help of the group) as she went, each person in turn provided a suitable special effect on their drum. The story basically revolved around a witch who went for a walk in the jungle and a bat dropped on her head. Then she met a prince on a horse and they then bumped in a troll. They all decided to walk further in the jungle and came across hollow tree trunks. The witch had an idea to use them as drums and suggested that they form a band and the story ended with everyone jamming loudly until the final stop command came from Jane. And oh yes, they all lived happily ever after.

That was another good evening for Buddy Beat. Each time we meet these Flexi-Care groups the different characters come shining through and this workshop was no different.

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

Johnstone Action Group - March 16th



Hear No Evil, See No Evil and Speak No Evil -
Otherwise known as Jess, Lesley and Tom.

Flexi-Care's 7th and final booking (for the moment!) for Buddy Beat arrived on March 16th and the venue was Thorn Primary in Johnstone, where The Johnstone Action Group, or JAG, meet up once a week. JAG is another Flexi-Care group for adults with learning difficulties.

The Buddy Beaters were-

Jane Bentley, Tom Chalmers, Lesley King and Jess McMillan

We arrived at the school for the 7-9 club meeting in time for its opening and very quickly the group had arranged a circle of chairs, for one of their organisers is a chap called Tom (which caused our Tom a bit of confusion at times) and he helps with the Linwood Action Group and had been with us when we held a workshop there on 17th February. For those who haven't been inside Thorn Primary, it is match-box sized and with 30 club members, volunteers and carers in the room, it was a tight fitting drum circle in the dining hall.

The group seemed eager to get going and Jane introduced herself and spoke a little about Buddy Beat and then introduced her 3 willing slaves, Tom, Lesley and Jess. Jane began with the throwing of the inflatable globe to get everyone's names and with such a large crowd this lasted a full ten minutes. From there, Jane demonstrated the different djembe, shakers, frogs and tambourines. She then invited everyone to pick their own and this went smoothly. Jane began by letting everyone beat away as they pleased and showed them how to follow instructions for playing loudly and softly, starting and stopping and first off they were very good at this. Out came the Stick of Power and Jane conducted the circle and then asked for volunteers to do the same. Caroline was first up and she seemed to get a kick out of the control it gave her and she was quickly followed by Christopher, Billy, James and Anne with Jane gently

coaxing them along. Next up Jane started off Rhumble Tennis which metamorphosed into Rhythm Tennis and one of the group was Tommy, who sat with one of Jane's new tall free-standing drums, and he showed excellent rhythm. Back into a jamming session and the noise certainly filled the small but high ceilinged hall. Keeping that going, it was the turn of just the drums for a minute and then solely the percussion instruments. Then the party favourite, with the men versus the women which Jane repeated once, and it was most likely a draw. One of the JAG members was Christopher and he sang almost non-stop every time the group played together and his repertoire included Rolf Harris' "Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport" and The Farms "Altogether Now", and he had rather a good voice. So that took us up to a well-earned break for 25 minutes and we sat with a can of pop and chatted. One of the chaps was Robbie and he asked Buddy Beat Tom where he came from. Tom replied "Paisley". Robbie digested this and then asked Jane where she came from. Jane replied "Glasgow" and a look of horror came over Robbie before he uttered "Oh my God!"

Jane began the 2nd period with a mighty rumble that raised the roof. Splitting the circle into two we then had one half playing and the other listening and they were all very kind to one another and politely applauded. Jane then asked for just the frogs to play and the peaceful croaking of 4 frogs filled the busy room. Jane asked for the tambourines to take over, but the group decided they just wanted to play and suddenly it was a free for all! Jane then regained control and split the group into 4, and each one took turns to play for twenty seconds or so, and some of the JAG faces lit up at their chance to perform. JAG Organiser Tom stirred things up by loudly by declaring that "The Linwood group was better!" which brought a chorus of denials and he was soon put in his place. Jane then ended things off with her mysterious instrument, The Hang which as usual brought out some oohs and aahs and Caroline thought it was a space ship and Robbie asked if there was a bomb in it. Jane demonstrated and the group seemed happy to sit back and take in the soft relaxing notes. Jane then suggested two come up at a time for a shot of The Hang but this quickly translated into six at a time huddled round it.

And that was the end of another Flexi-Care workshop. It had been great fun, as had all the workshops. Each was different in their own way and each had their own personalities, giving us some laughs and this helped make them all very rewarding especially when we saw the happy faces and eagerness of the group members. One thing is for sure, and that is that we have all made many new friends during our time with everyone at Flexi-Care!

Words by Tom Chalmers
Photograph taken by Jane Bentley