

## 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### The Linwood Action Group

Just twenty four hours after the last Flexi-Care event and on 17<sup>th</sup> 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
- ✓ 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