

Oor Day Oot

2nd June 2011



Back Row- Anne, Jane, Marion, Jeanette, Graeme, Alistair, Noreen, Mary
Front Row- Maureen, Hazel, Christine, Jackie, Eileen, Connor



Last June Buddy Beat travelled through to Kirkcaldy to play at a prestigious conference called “Gonnae No Dae That”. We went down a storm that day, further casting The Buddy Beat net, and as it was a gloriously sunny day, Jeanette Allan marvellously suggested that we take a detour on the way back and visit the coastal town of Kinghorn where we soaked up the sun and vista for a lovely hour.

Jeanette later mooted the idea of Buddy Beat having a day out, perhaps to the sea somewhere to drum outdoors, with cucumber sandwiches and lashings of ginger beer to boot. But with the summer holidays just around the corner, it was thought that perhaps it was too late to organise something and so the general consensus was to put this neat idea to bed, and bring it back out of hibernation in 2011.

And that is just what we did! In early May we spoke about this and several ideas were floated around the group and we plumped for group member Margaret’s smashing suggestion of travelling to Lochwinnoch where at Castle Semple Loch, we could have fun outdoors jamming till we drop and also where there is a visitor centre with coffee shop and restrooms. Two things Buddy Beat cannot do without!

And so, the vast majority of the group put their names to the ever growing list and in the end Buddy Beat were:-

Jeanette Allan, Jane Bentley, Marion Bisland, Allan Borland, Hazel Borland, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie, Mary Graham, Connor Muir, Jackie McDowall, Maureen McGill, Eileen McGrory, Alistair McIntyre, Christine Robertson, Graeme Tytler and Noreen Young.

That was a magnificent 16 and included new member Alistair McIntyre who had only joined Buddy Beat three weeks earlier and he is someone who brings a good sense of humour and rhythm to our weekly meetings. Also along for the ride, was Maureen McGill, Alistair’s support worker. Both have taken to Buddy Beat like ducks to water, so a trip to the loch was very apt indeed.

Scotland had been battered by terrible wind and endless rain showers in the weeks running up to our trip, and the night before we all prayed for good weather. And so we met at 10am outside our normal meeting point at Paisley’s The Lagoon Centre and everyone seemed excited. We travelled in a flotilla of cars with Christine, Tom, Allan, Hazel and Jane (using a hired people carrier) being promoted to official taxi-driver status. It’s only a 20 minute jaunt to Lochwinnoch and we gathered once there to pick out our spot. Jane held a quick meeting, for we are a democracy if nothing else and we selected a sheltered clearing at the entrance to the loch. We were joined by a couple of Occupational Therapists and four or five inpatients from Dykebar Hospital, who had come down in a minibus for a breath of fresh air and a spot of drumming.

As we set up our chair and instruments, Allan busied himself with setting up his tables and barbeque, looking at ease as he started cooking. Now, who says he isn’t our very own Burger King?



“Ah, the fresh air and a set of drums....what more could we ask for?”

Jane got the proceedings started with a jam and it was a good feeling to be playing out in the open, even though there was a smirry rainfall, but thankfully it was short-lived.

That lasted for perhaps ten minutes before Jane got us to play “Bop Around” which caused more than a few giggles. That transformed into each person playing a beat or rhythm of their own and then passing it to anyone in the circle. After half an hour or so our guests bowed out, content to wander and explore the loch, coffee shop and gift store.

Just then some blue sky appeared and we all cheered. Jane magically produced The Stick of Power and we were treated to little games and exercises led by Jane, Jeanette and then Connor who passed the baton to Noreen. When Noreen was done she passed control to Alistair and he had us singing and drumming along to that well known “Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizzahut and McDonald’s” ditty that was a big hit a few years back. Before Alistair could pick someone else to lead the group, Allan declared that the food was ready. We could have been playing for The Prime Minister David Cameron, American President Barack Obama or even his Holiness in Rome himself, and it would have been the same result- instant downing of tools and stampede the Barbie! Lunch lasted a good hour and we chatted and ate, mingling and laughing and it was such a pleasant atmosphere. Everyone seemed so happy and relaxed and it looked as though the weather was on our side and it got warmer as the time went on, causing us to peel our layers off gradually until we were in our polo shirts and t-shirts.



Mr Burger King- Allan, here to satisfy your culinary needs

Duly fed and watered, we began to play again around 12.30 if only to send a message out to Anne, Eileen and Jeanette who had disappeared sometime earlier. The jungle drums seemed to have the desired effect for the missing trio soon toddled back to us. Anne made an announcement to the group that Eileen had just achieved something rather startling. Our Queen of Souvenirs had visited the gift store and successfully left without making a single purchase! Indeed, it is true and the group gave Eileen a hearty round of applause and a loud rumble of congratulations!

Now that we were all seated, Jane asked us to show our appreciation to Allan and Hazel for all their great work in making our day such a success and we complied with gusto.

Tom had brought along his camcorder to capture the day’s fun and asked for a performance of “Funky Lunch” and Jane put the gang through their paces before giving a terrific rendition of this Buddy Beat classic. And the title seemed kind of apt after Mr Burger King’s specials. The group looked so pleased and relaxed and it was smiles all around. Playing outdoors is a very special experience. Perhaps if we were based in Spain or the South of France we would do it more, as it is fair to say that Scotland’s weather can be called “constrictive”.



“Howdy fans. If you liked my drumming-
Wait until you hear my singing!”



Thankfully Noreen gets that growth on top of her head lanced next week

Next up there was a chance for the group to exercise their tonsils for a song from their performance repertoire. Half the gang remained in their chairs while the other half stood behind. Jane was choral mistress and gave each half of the group their instructions for our first open-air rendition of “The Ford Escort Song”.

Jane uses this action based song as part of her work in hospitals where she helps lead singing sessions as part of a programme called “Singing for The Brain” and helps geriatric and dementia patients. It’s songs like this, with their simple actions, can unlock the most withdrawn of people. Jane taught this to Buddy Beat for a bit of fun last year and it went down a storm and quickly became a favourite, particularly with our own chanteuse, Marion Borland. We even performed it publicly in November 2010 at The Dementia Learning Forum in Glenrothes, roping in a 100 strong audience and it was not only charming, but smile inducing and utterly beautiful and delightful. It has three basic lines-

“A Ford Escort, A Ford Escort” to which you pretend to drive a large steering wheel-

“A Mini mini mini” to which you pretend to drive a small or mini steering wheel-

And “Ferrari, Ferrari” in which you accentuate the letters “r” and move you hands in one direction for the first Ferrari and back the way for the 2nd.

Now that we all have that battened down, Jane gave the group a run through before our main performance. When it was time the gang raised the bar and it was terrific. The sun was out, our bellies were full, we were surrounded by beautiful scenery and it all came together superbly. Graeme stole the show as he gradually got louder and louder as he got carried away and he ended in a truly operatic style. Brilliant!



Connor and Mary- this is the life!



Marion rushes back from the gift store in time for “The Ford Escort Song”

Sadly, Jane and Jeanette had to leave, taking Alistair, Maureen and Marion with them, but everyone else decided to keep going and for the last half hour we played “Travelling Trios” where the rhythm migrates around the circle with a different trio playing as it moves. We then built up a rhythm and stripped it back down, chatted awhile before ending with a jam.

Everyone had a great time and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The weather turned good for us, we were very healthy in numbers, and every bum had a seat (good job guys!) and Allan and Hazel did us more than proud on the catering front. We played some terrific beats and rhythms and sang like songbirds. Just like that well known song, it was a “Perfect Day” and no doubt will become an annual fixture on the Buddy Beat calendar.

Tom and Anne were lost in the wilderness for three days



We Salute You, Ian!



Tom informed everyone that group member Ian Tobin would be leaving Buddy Beat which is a sad day for everyone. Ian is moving to Glasgow to be nearer his sister. Ian joined Buddy Beat in December 2009 and it was the same day of our end of the year Christmas Party. We must have done something right that day (perhaps the bounteous food on supply and the fact that he got a present from Santa?) for Ian quickly became a regular. Quiet at first, Ian showed he had rhythm and as time went on he became more confident and was soon a valued member of the group. He joined us on our trips and adventures, happy to be part of our travelling troupe.



Ian had told Tom that he was sad to have to leave Buddy Beat and that he would miss everyone, adding that he hoped we would keep the door open just in case he feels the need to jump on a train one Thursday morning for a bit of drumming. Good luck, Ian! We will all miss you and hope to see you sometime in the near future.

And it's goodbye from him....



Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

