

Buddy Beat were visited and interviewed by the Paisley Express during one of our regular Thursday meetings and nobody had any idea that it would be a double page spread!

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DUET: Jane Bentley and Karen Auld let the music flow

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DRUM-THING SPECIAL: The group has been hugely successful

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LEADING THE WAY: Janette Allen is the organiser of Buddy Beat

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HAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT: Drumming can be great fun

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'Buddy Beat has given me confidence and helped my self-esteem

By **KENNETH SPEIRS**

HEALTH bosses are banging the drum for the healing power of music.

The Buddy Beat drumming group meets every week at Paisley Arts Centre and sees men and women who are dealing with mental health problems take part in a type of music therapy that aims to provide enjoyment, lift depression and boost confidence.

Janette Allen, lead occupational therapist for mental health at Paisley's Dykebar Hospital, is the organiser of Buddy Beat and she believes passionately that music is a great way to bring about "social inclusion".

Three stages are involved in the project - red, amber and green.

The first stage sees people taking part in an activity in an environment such as Dykebar Hospital.

Buddy Beat is an example of the amber stage as people meet in a supervised group outside hospital in a venue such as Paisley Arts Centre.

Finally, they move on to the green stage by organising their own sessions themselves at the WRVS centre and café, in Grassieside Street, Paisley, once a month.

And Janette is passionate about what Buddy Beat can do to help people who are suffering from problems with their mental health.

She told the *Paisley Daily Express*: "It started as a social inclusion project, which meant moving mental health focused groups into ordinary non-stigmatising places.

SCHEME DRUMS UP SUPPORT TO HELP P

"We are also completing a training course with support from the Community Health Partnership Bright Ideas Fund, with eight Buddy Beat members becoming workshop assistants in order to extend the reach of drumming in other areas. The increase in confidence and competence is amazing."

The healing power of music has been known and appreciated since time immemorial.

Who doesn't like to put on their favourite CD after a stressful day or when they are feeling a bit low? Soon, things don't seem so bad after all.

Anxiety

But, for some, music can be the lifeblood that helps to take them from despair to brighter days, lifting them from clinical depression or anxiety to a state of mind that allows them to function in the real world.

And that is just the sort of situation that has been taken in hand by the drumming group for the past two and a half years.

At Buddy Beat, group members sit in a circle with their drums and make music with the help of community musician Jane Bentley.

All sorts of rhythms and

tones are drummed out, often quite noisily!

And the aims are to give everyone the confidence to take control of the instrument and to act as members of a group.

Jane said: "People here have formed really strong social bonds and they move from feeling isolated to being confident.

"The art of drumming is also the art of listening, of tuning into the group."

Anne Downie, 47, from Barrhead, heard about Buddy Beat through a medical professional and decided to give it a go.

She said: "I was really quite nervous about going along at first but, when I met up with the others, everything else fell into place and it was really good.

"At first, I thought I couldn't go into a group of people and play a drum but I did and I really enjoyed it.

"On the back of Buddy Beat, I'm now involved in a drama group and I could never ever have been involved in something like that without Buddy Beat.

"It's got me out of the house and I've made a lot of friends through it. Buddy Beat is a big part of my life now."

Tim Chalmers, 44, heard about Buddy Beat when he was attending an assertiveness management course at Paisley's Charleston Centre.

And, like Anne, he was at first



ENJOYMENT: Anne Downie said Buddy Beat is now a big part of her life
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PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

slightly wary about drumming -- and alongside strangers at that.
"I plucked up the courage and came along," said Tom. "At that time, there were only three other people involved, so I can imagine what it's like for new people now when we've got 15 or 20 others in the group, but it's worth the effort."

Tom is full of praise for what Buddy Beat has done for him.

Supportive

He added, "It's given me a focus and helped my self confidence, I get out more now and I've made a lot of friends who are very supportive of each another."

Getting out into the world is one of the best things that has come from Buddy Beat for 62-year-old Lesley King.

She said: "A friend suggested that I go along to Buddy Beat. I was spending an awful lot of time in the house as I was suffering badly from depression at the time.

"At first, I didn't think I would be able to do anything like that but I gradually got involved and it really makes you gain confidence.

"It has made me interact more with people on a daily basis. I really would recommend Buddy Beat to anyone."

● If you would like to know more about Buddy Beat, call Janette Allen on 0141 884 8122.



FAN-TASTIC: Lesley King would recommend anyone to join the group pd6270510buddybeat-11



MUSIC MAN: Joining Buddy Beat has given Tom Chalmer's a real confidence boost pd6270510buddybeat-10