

# *The Buddy Beat*



Back Row - Christine, Heather, Allan, Frances, Margaret, Jane

Front Row - Hazel, Mary, Eileen, Anne & Tom

## *Renfrewshire Quality Awards*

*20<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

Buddy Beat had another event to attend, the second in just two days. This time the gang were requested to go along to Renfrewshire House in Paisley, home to Renfrewshire Council. What was the reason? - The Renfrewshire Quality Awards. These awards cover 6 differing themes such as “Safer” and “Stronger” and are an opportunity for services and projects in Renfrewshire to gain acknowledgment for Quality, and Buddy Beat came under the “Healthier” category.

Jeanette Allan & Jane Bentley worked hard together to nominate The Buddy Beat for a Quality Award. With 50 nominations received, Jeanette, Jane and the group were thrilled to hear that they had made the final three, an accolade in itself.

So, we were required to attend the council buildings and we were given a ten minute pitch in front of a judging panel of 5. The panel was comprised of Chairwoman Fiona MacKay, Renfrewshire CHP Head of Planning & Health Improvement; David Stewart, Chief Superintendent Strathclyde Police; Dorothy Cowie, Director Scotland Excel; Bob Davidson ,Chief Executive Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce and Alan McNiven, Chief Executive Engage Renfrewshire. After our ten minute pitch the judges would have a further ten minutes to ask us any questions.



Our Eileen tells Anne- “This is like Britain’s Got Talent meets X-Factor!”



In the final three were also Renfrewshire Adolescent Drug & Alcohol Resource- RADAR. The last finalist was the Renfrewshire Mental Health Arts & Film Festival which meant that Jeanette Allan had the rare distinction of being behind two of the three finalists.

One of Buddy Beat's newest members is Heather Moore who has joined us after the closure of the Key Enterprise Project and came along with us to make her Buddy Beat performance debut. So, Buddy Beat were:-

*Jeanette Allan, Jane Bentley, Allan Borland, Hazel Borland,*

*Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie, Mary Graham, Margaret Kinninmont,*

*Heather Moore, Eileen McGrory, Frances Nisbet & Christine Robertson*

Before the judges came in we had a quiet run through of what we would play to help settle any nerves. Allan and Hazel brought along our red display boards packed with Buddy Beat photos and they placed them facing the door, so that the judges could not fail to stop and have a gander. At 2.45pm the judges arrived and so did Jeanette who whooshed in doing a mid-air quick change as she covered up her black festival t-shirt with her green Buddy Beat one. The judges took their seats, not failing to miss the drums strategically placed by the sides of their chairs. Fiona MacKay introduced herself and received a rumble on the drums, a surprise to the entire panel and there was an expectant look on their faces as Fiona MacKay introduced her four fellow judges one by one. David Stewart was the last to be introduced and we saved the loudest rumble for the Chief Superintendent of Strathclyde Police.

Jane began by introducing herself and Buddy Beat. Then we showed a four and a half minute version of our film "Keep the Beat...Our Journey in Rhythm". This condensed version of our film had previously been shown at a NHS conference that Buddy Beat had played at Glasgow SECC in August 2011. As soon as it finished, Jane set us off playing a neat little jam. We coasted along for a while and Jane counted us out on four and back in again. This was repeated a few times, and then Jane gave the front row a rest while they back row played on and then reversed this. Jane ended with a series of loud centre beats that ended on a heartbeat. Lovely! Turning her attention to five apprehensive judges, Jane told them that the best way to experience the beat is to be "inside it". The panel lifted up their drums, looking a little wary and Jane turned to Super Eileen who went through her paces, showing the judges how to hold the drums. Eileen explained that that you use your palm and bounce it off the drum as though it was a trampoline and everyone hit the



middle of their drums. Eileen counted everyone out and then explained that a lighter sound could be made on the edge of the drum. We all followed her lead and after several beats Eileen counted us out once more. It was time for us all to play together and Jane told the panel to play whatever they wanted to and as we ripped along, the smiles and delight from The Famous 5 was there for us to see. This lasted a few minutes with Jane asking Buddy Beat to play quieter, letting the panel hear themselves play and she then reversed this, cutting the time between changes all the time. Bringing us all back together, we bristled along and ended on a crisp unison beat!

It was now time for the panel to ask any questions they had. David Stewart asked the gang what benefit they found being part of Buddy Beat. Frances got the ball rolling saying how inclusive and welcoming the group was and how she appreciated the friendships. The floodgates opened and firstly Margaret reiterated Frances' point, adding that drumming always puts a smile on everyone's faces, citing the panel as an example. Eileen chipped that her self-confidence had soared, Tom spoke about the creation of a safe place where no one judges anyone and where we can all be ourselves, Mary spoke about the coming together in a peaceful setting and the support we offer to one another, Hazel mentioned how your worries swish away when you start to play, Anne spoke of the encouragement and friendship she receives and Christine related how playing releases endorphins, making you calm and takes you into a pleasant place and also how real friendships have sparked up among the group. Fiona MacKay quipped- "Wow! You pitch a question expecting one person to answer, and everyone has something to say!" and then asked about the colours of our polo shirts and Allan replied that they were representative of the colours of the Boomwhackers.

Alan McNiven asked about our numbers and if the gang was the main body of Buddy Beat. Jane explained that the group numbers can go up and down with some people perhaps coming along every second or third week, but that we were really the core of Buddy Beat. Jane also explained that we were currently seeing a surge in numbers and Jeanette added that we had 24 in Buddy Beat the previous day.

Bob Davidson enquired about our equipment and Jane explained that initially all the drums belonged to her but that we had received grant funding which enabled us to buy our own drums. Jane asked for a show of hands to see how many owned their own drums and a good number rose upwards, and Jane also explained that a few members have received their drums using a saving scheme run by the group. Jeanette asked Tom how many drums he had and Tom replied "Four". Jane tittered, saying it was a downward slope!



Dorothy Cowie said how much she had enjoyed playing and asked if we had ever played at Paisley's annual 10k race. That caused a few intakes of breath and Dorothy added that she thought it would be really powerful to hear the drums while the race was on. Dorothy hinted that she could perhaps book us up, and Hazel informed her that she was the secretary and would happily give her our details. Watch this space!

And that was it! Our twenty minutes were up. All the judges commented on a great pitch and it was clear that they had all enjoyed themselves. We had all been a tad nervous before it began, but as soon as we got under way, it was all wonderfully relaxed and very enjoyable. Heather told Tom that she had felt nervous but that it had all disappeared once we started. That's the first one under your belt, Heather!

Quip of the day, well that belonged to Margaret. As Fiona MacKay brought it all to a close and the panel began to rise from their seats, Margaret chirped "And no, you can't keep the drums!"

What next? Well this is just Part 1 of this story. The result and winner will be announced at a special event on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Jeanette said that the Festival pitch had gone down very well too. Whatever happens, everyone at Buddy Beat is so proud to have made the final three! Oh, and we might have got a booking!



A Top Cat Publication by Tom Chalmers- 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012

