



*The Buddy Beat  
@ Ralston ROAR*



*28<sup>th</sup> March 2014*

*Our good friends at ROAR- Reaching Older Adults in Renfrewshire- once again booked our services. Just a week after our Houston ROAR success, we were back on the road to Ralston ROAR which is in Paisley and is based in St Mark's on Glasgow Road.*



*The Buddy Beat was asked to come along to hold a workshop at 1.00pm and we were looking forward to meeting up with the members.*

*The Buddy Beat Six were-*

- *Dr Jane Bentley*
- *Marion Bisland*
- *Tom Chalmers*
- *Anne Dowie*
- *Eileen McGrory*
- *Christine Robertson*

*On arrival we were warmly welcomed by ROAR Director Alan Smith and ROAR co-ordinator Anne, who we had met at Houston previously.*



*Our Marion with a cup of performance juice minutes before it all started.....*



*Ready, willing & able-*

*Anne, Marion, Jane, Christine & Eileen*





*Anne & Eileen- The Ladies in Red*

*We arranged the chairs into two circles; a small inner circle of 14 with a wider circle going around, which created a great sight and at each chair we placed either a drum of varying sizes or a percussion instrument.*

*The ROAR members filed in with good speed and instantly chatter filled the air as they examined their instruments excitedly. Soon we were joined by 38 people!*

*Drumming circles of this magnitude don't come along very often and when they do they never seem to disappoint. And so the scene was set- a great hall, bright and full of light, a myriad of drums and percussion instruments and a large, eager gathering!*



*Jane took to her feet, strapped her drum on and introduced The Buddy Beat, explaining how drumming was once a niche pass-time but that it was now one of global proportions. Jane went on to explained how to find the deeper beats in the middle and the higher beats on the edge. Jane then took time to introduce the shakers, tambourines and castanets and let them be heard, which always delivers giggles. Buddy Beat were primed to play music as a demonstration, but the Ralston gang were in a hurry and instantly everyone was off and running! After a minute or two, Jane counted everyone out on a count of four and our timing was immaculate! That is always a good sign*

*that everyone is on the same page. Next up, the ROAR circles learned to rhumble on the edge, with Jane using her hands to raise the volume up and back down again.*

*Now that everyone knew how to stop/start and to rhumble, the next step was to demonstrate short easy rhythms. Jane whipped up some of her very best, some simple and others more complex, and ripped through fifteen. This seemed to please everyone and the air was filled with chatter and laughter. Sensing the hunger, Anne then sped through half a dozen of her own rhythms which everyone lapped up and then Tom did likewise. Newly armed with almost 30 different short rhythms, it was time to let everyone loose on a big jamming session. One of the gentlemen beside Jane asked if we could try playing the rhythm to "The March of the Siamese Children" from the musical "The King & I". Jane admitted that was one she was not familiar with and suggested that he should lead us off. He coughed in surprise and composed himself before starting us off. Quickly everyone was repeating his rhythm and the room vibrated. This charged along for a while before Jane shouted above the throng "Change your beat if you like!" We played for maybe five or six minutes and it was a terrific, pumping sound. Every so often Jane stopped the circle and then went*

*straight back in, and the ROAR ladies and gentlemen were with is the entire way. Fantastic!*



*The clock was ticking and there was just ten minutes remaining. Everyone got the chance to change their instrument and several did so, some percussion ladies desperate for a drum and some drum ladies, eyeing a change of tone. Off we set again and the room was rocking along. Jane invited people to have a look around and borrow someone else's rhythm, and you could hear the change in the general beat. Next Jane split the group into two, letting people have a brief respite and a chance to listen- when you play together in a group you can sometimes only hear everyone else playing when you stop and pin back your ears. This went back and forth a few times before Jane split us into four groups, each of which had at least one Buddy Beat member in it to help maintain the beat. This was great fun and the ladies and gentlemen of Ralston ROAR were clearly delighted to be in the spotlight in this way. Jane brought us all back together, bringing the sound way down and produced the Hapi Drum, playing its soothing and melodic tones, explaining how it is made from recycled*



gas canisters. This brought out a chorus of oohs and aahs and the vibe in the room mellowed as we quietly drummed along. A couple of the ROAR ladies had a quick try for themselves before Jane brought the proceedings to a triumphant ending with a soaring rumble!

ROAR Director Alan Smith came in and thanked The Buddy Beat for coming along. He said that he had popped his head through the door a few times and witnessed many happy, smiling faces. Alan also added that he had attended a conference at Glasgow SECC in the past and that he participated in a Buddy Beat workshop there. A lady called Margaret, who sat with Tom, said "I knew when I came here today that there was going to be some drumming. I didn't know what kind exactly and if I would be able to do it, but I did and I have thoroughly enjoyed myself." As the ROAR members left the hall we received many thanks and more than a few "That was fun!" & "That was lovely!" comments were heard.

It was a workshop to remember and we all enjoyed ourselves. Jane summed it up perfectly-"The beat was so good I didn't want to end it!"

Next up we have a Lochwinnoch ROAR drum circle in a few weeks' time and who knows what will happen there?

*Words by Tom Chalmers*

*Photos by Tom & Eileen*

*A Buddy Beat Publication March 2014*

