

# The Hubbers



Come on over to our place.....

This is a diary of some of the days spent in The Festival Hub by one of The Hubbers.....

**SCOTTISH  
MENTAL  
HEALTH  
ARTS & FILM  
FESTIVAL**  
**RENFREWSHIRE**

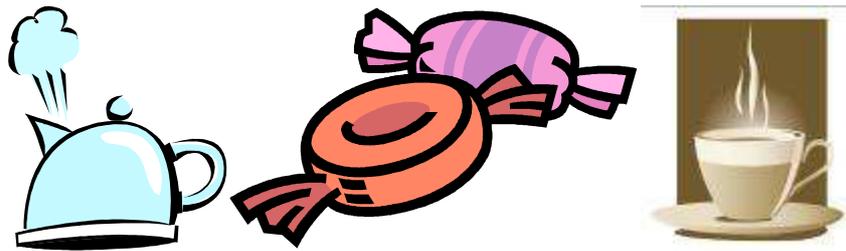
5<sup>th</sup> October 2010

The Hub was manned masterfully by Henderson Clark, Technical Instructor at Paisley's Dykebar Hospital. Henderson is a man of many talents and knows anyone who is anyone, and everyone going into The Hub was guaranteed a big smile and friendly welcome and more than likely the offer of a cup of tea or coffee from his well stocked Tuck Shop.

Henderson's Hub Cafeé.....

.....Where's there's always time for a chat.....

....Sept 30<sup>th</sup> until October 21<sup>st</sup>....drop in anytime



Tom and Jeanette joined Henderson at The Hub and passed a pleasant morning chatting to visitors. Tom was surprised to see former Buddy Beater Gwyneth and they chatted for a while and also Kate Greig who had popped in with her daughter. Everyone seemed genuinely interested in the Festival and we were happy to answer any questions.

A series of lunch-time performances have been arranged for the duration of the Festival and called Arts4Lunch. Running for twenty minutes from 12.45 this would include singers, dancers, musicians, writing and poetry workshops.



As part of Arts4Lunch, today's programme saw soprano Sarah McNeil perform. Connections! Connections!- Sarah's grandfather Eric Niven is the Chairman of the Dykebar Hospital Guild and every time Buddy Beat have played at Dykebar Eric is always there lending his support and a friendly word or two. And Sarah's mother is a nurse and saw Buddy Beat perform at the Nurses in Practice Conference at the SECC in March 2009. She told Tom that she thoroughly enjoyed our performance and the Boomwhackers had made a big impression on her. It's a small world!



Sarah McNeil in fine voice



The Hub's appreciative audience

Sarah sang half a dozen show tunes, including "Tell me On a Sunday" and "Maybe This Time" and her great voice really brought these tunes to life. It was a very enjoyable programme from Sarah and was appreciated by everyone there.



6<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Tom returned to The Hub for another stint on The Buddy Beat stall and to offer company to Henderson. Henderson had been informed by the security staff of the shopping centre that Wednesdays are the quietest of days and they were not far wrong as footfall outside the shop remained low almost all day. Subsequently the visitors to The Hub were fewer but of those venturing inside, many found the information useful. Henderson's display of balloons on sticks near the front door proved a good idea as several young parents brought their little ones inside for a nosey.

Joining Henderson was John from Recovery Renfrewshire who informed Tom that he had been a willing participant at 2 Buddy Beat workshops in the past. Also joining in to lend a hand was Connor from The Wynd Up Theatre Group and he spoke to Tom about the group's forthcoming production of "Shuggy the Paisley Millionaire".

Also joining Henderson and his Merry Gang were two ladies visiting for the day and set up their stall for Alcohol Awareness Week. We were all presented with a special glass that has unit measurements on the side for different drinks and then sat a small test on alcohol. Who would have known that in ancient Rome if a husband found his wife drinking alcohol he had the right to have her put to death! Henderson was very taken with that law!

Hazel arrived at noon, soon followed by Allan. Jeanette then arrived and began to get the room ready for the Arts4Lunch 12.45 segment. Today was our film-maker James Cairn's chance to show his own film "Changes Within", which relates his personal journey with his Bipolar condition. Buddy Beat's Christine and Eileen arrived soon after to lend their support. After a technical hitch or two, the showing finally got under way.

James showed his film 3 times during the afternoon, speaking and answering questions and said that his film seemed to have been enjoyed by everyone.



Tom manning the ship SS Buddy Beat-  
Photo taken by Hazel Borland



7<sup>th</sup> October 2010

An early start at The Hub for Henderson as he set the place up for The Buddy Beat to take over for their Drop in N Drum which ran from 10am to noon.

Buddy Beat turned out in force and were joined by Connor from The Wynd Up Drama Group. Connor helps out at The Hub during the day and Tom had suggested the day before that he should come along and try out the drums. Also there was Occupational Therapy student Laura, who was tagging along with Karen Auld.

The Hub was filled with noise for two hours as Jeanette Allan and The Buddy Beat cracked out rhythms and beats playing a variety of games using their djembe drums and coloured Boomwhackers. Most people were happy to pause as they passed by and take in the beats, with a few being persuaded to come inside. Christine Robertson tried to wave in one chap who seemed to be enjoying it from afar but he almost ran away at the thought of taking part, shouting as he ran away "It sounds great!"

Henderson had the support again of John from Recovery Renfrewshire who played with The Buddy Beat (and not for the first time) and Occupational Therapist Michelle Connolly from Paisley's The Charleston Centre.

Perhaps it was the music that brought people in, or perhaps it was just a sign of the footfall in the centre picking up as the week wore on, but The Hub certainly had more people coming in for a look around.

The Arts4Lunch performance was "Poetry with Read Raw" and also included an afternoon workshop both of which were keenly attended and appreciated.



Buddy Beat filling The Hub



8<sup>th</sup> October 2010

A quiet start to the morning saw Henderson, Tom and Maggi Boyd having time to sit and right the world's problems. Mark Reilly popped in to say hello on his way to The Wynd Up Theatre Group.

The Hub was the focus of "Who Canny Sing?" and was set to kick off at 11am. Maggi Boyd is keen to get communities singing and has a vision of Renfrewshire's Senior Forums forming their own community choirs. The benefits of chorus singing are well documented and include the release of tensions, enhancement of concentration, and a fun way to spend the time, creating an opportunity for friendship and laughter. The idea behind today was to get people singing together and hopefully encourage people to join a choir or form their own.



Tom and fellow Buddy Beater Lesley King  
“It’s nice to see you, to see you nice!”

We were joined by Martin Denman, a keen Buddy Beat supporter and participator in choirs over the years and together he and Maggi staged today’s event. Martin sought the help of pianist Catherine Scott, who is an accompanist with a choir that Martin once was a member of and Catherine hit on the bright idea of bringing along some of the men from her choir, and we were joined by five gentlemen. This, together with the help of Angela McCallum, leader of OTYS and the School of Music, set the scene for a singing bonanza. Jeanette Allan also came along to lend her support and vocal talents.



The Hubbettes- Tom, Maggi and Martin  
Launching their sell out European Tour in Paisley

Martin started us off by suggesting “There’s A Kind Of Hush” by The Carpenters and very quickly we found our voice and in a speed that impressed everyone, we zipped from song to song, covering 30 in all! The dulcet tones of the Who Canny Sing Choir stopped passers by and some were encouraged to join in and at one point 25 plus people made up the choir. Some songs were easy and melodic such as “Westering Home”, some were swingsome with the likes of “Fly Me to the Moon” while others such as “You are the Sunshine of My Life” were downright tricky. But whatever each song threw at us, the point was that we were all having fun and laughing and you could feel the spirits lifting each time we sang.



Angela McCallum coming to the rescue

Angela McCallum helped us resurrect a dying “Stand By Me” and near the end had the choir singing the 100mph song “You Can’t Stop the Beat” from the musical Hairspray, together with those limb twisting movements that go with it. It was the best fun you could have and enjoyed thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and the singing brought people into The Hub. Marvellous!



Martin and his faithful followers



It's the motion of the ocean; it's the sun in the sky.....you can't stop the beat!



8<sup>th</sup> October 2010

The Hub was taken over for the day by some of the local churches, filling the time with a barrowload of activities to entice the busy Saturday shoppers inside. Amongst the activities were journal making and card making which was well attended by visitors. Creating healthy snacks was also available. Proving very popular with a need to book your timeslot was a massage service where you could receive a hand-massage or shoulder massage. Jeanette Allan came in especially to take up this service and a shoulder massage eased away her festival organisation stresses.



The Hub held a real sense of community

Children were entertained by storytelling and also a puppet theatre called Celebration Puppets who performed four times during the day. This company provide great fun with terrific puppets brought to life with the help of music and we were treated to a few special guests during these interludes- Elton John and The Proclaimers, no less. The performances are energetic and punchy and the company take well known songs and use them to deliver their message. For example, The Proclaimers' "I would Walk 500 Miles" was altered to "Jesus Fed 5000 Men". These shows were very much enjoyed by adults and children alike.



Sir Elton John



The Proclaimers popped in to rock the Hub

Music was also on offer. Create are an organisation operated from St Matthew's Church of The Nazarene in Paisley. They give young people the chance to create and play music. Last night they had a Battle of The Bands which we hear was a huge success. One of the winners was a young man who has a talent for creating beat box beats using just his voice and a microphone. It wasn't planned for him to perform, but sometimes the impromptu things in life are best. He seemed really relaxed and natural, teaching the children some basics before performing a piece. The crowd

gathered and wedged in the doorway, creating a real buzz and sense of busyness. He went down very well.



Mr Voicebox himself



Also due to perform at the 12.45 Arts4Lunch were The Creators but they had to pull out. One of the young singers from Create is a young man called Peter Quinn and he was asked to perform at short notice and he played 3 of his own songs while playing guitar and his bluesy style was a treat to listen to. Peter enlisted the help of other young singers including Dominic and also a duet called Lewis and Heather and both of these acts also went down very well



The talented songwriter Peter Quinn



Singer Dominic sang four numbers



Duo Heather and Lewis entertained

It was a real treat to be in The Hub today. It was the busiest we have seen and a real buzz was created with the activities, puppets and music. Excellent!



16<sup>th</sup> October

The third and final Saturday at The Hub saw OTYS Leader Angela McCallum with a handful of girls from her School of Music, running from 10am to 2pm.

Each of the girls, aged 8 to 16, sang two or three solo numbers during the day and each showed a real talent. Angela herself sang a few, notably X Factor's Alexandra Burke's "Broken Heels" which attracted some attention from the shoppers passing by.

The seats inside were busy with parents and friends coming to see their own perform. As Henderson rightly pointed out, the crowds grew bigger when the girls sang their songs, with the windows busy with people peering in. Highlights included 9 year old Emma singing a sterling version of Cyndi Lauper's "True Colours" and it appears that she recently won a cash prize in a Radio Clyde singing competition with the same song. 16 year old Jenny gave a powerful rendition of "Feeling Good" and perhaps the best was 16 year old Gemma who totally brought to life "The Climb" which had always been rather bland to Tom's ears, but Gemma made it her own.

The girls all sang very well and each performance was greatly appreciated by the audiences. Angela does great work with young people, building up their confidence

levels to be able to sing in public like this. The Hub quietened down after that with just a handful of visitors as the town seemed to wind down.

That's Henderson and The Hubbers on the final stretch now until the Hub closes on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October.



Here's Angela belting out one of her songs. You can see she has Aled Jones' full attention.



## October 20th

With The Hub soon to end its run, Master of The Realm Henderson has started winding down some of the displays. He says that on Monday and Tuesday it had been quiet at times, busy in others and that on Monday Hannah Jackson, mezzo soprano went down well and on Tuesday soprano Aisling Gilbert was well received.

Today, Phil Arbon of Paisley Artists was resident in The Hub and he gave demonstrations on his art and set up an activity table where anyone could create whatever they wished on canvas.

When Tom arrived, Margaret and Connor from The Wynd Up Drama Group were deep in concentration, each creating their own masterpiece under the personal supervision of Phil Arbon. Margaret commented on how chilled she felt, sitting passing the time painting something psychedelic in purple, red and yellow while Connor was painting a cat (not a real one, just a canvas one!)



Margaret Da Vinci and Connor Monet in the Masterclass



October 21<sup>st</sup>

The final day of the Festival Hub arrived quicker than most people would have imagined and on the menu today were The Buddy Beat who held their 2<sup>nd</sup> Drop in N Drum workshop of the Festival.

Henderson busied himself with starting to dismantle The Hub while Buddy Beat began their rhythms. Much noise and hilarity was created in what can only be described as a very relaxed atmosphere. The Buddy Beat were joined by Hubber John Green and Ross McFarlane from The Scottish Health Network and passers by found it hard not to stop for a moment or two and see what all the noise was about and some even danced their way by the large windows! Many games were played and a few ladies brought in their grandkids and they were more than happy to take part. The Buddy Beat also celebrated Community Musician Jane Bentley's recent success in becoming a Doctor of Philosophy.



The happy drummers



In the Arts4Lunch 12.45 spot, local dance group Dirty Feet held centre stage. Like The Buddy Beat they are a community group for people who have lived with mental health issues. In fact, last October both The Buddy Beat and Dirty Feet played at the same event in the Paisley Town Hall at a Renfrewshire Disability Arts Forum Relaunch.

Dirty Feet began by showing their own film which was completed in February of this year. Entitled “9 Lives” this short film held the audiences attention and was certainly powerful and dramatic. Then their leader announced that they were going to perform an excerpt from a new piece, “Received Call” that they had created. They mix their dancing with fast changing clips of music that keeps the interest going and you can’t help but see how much the dancers are enjoying themselves. When they had finished they received a warm round of applause and we were informed that the group are to shortly tour special needs schools to try and get disabled children or children with

learning difficulties dancing. Also, the dancers themselves have been learning to become teachers to help move the group further into the community.



Dirty Feet mid performance

That was a good day to end The Hub’s occupation with two mental health community groups taking centre stage and help showed that being creative and performing in public helps erase the social stigma surrounding mental health.



## The Comments Book

Throughout the Festival, visitors to the Hub were invited to add their comments to a special book and this neat little addition allows everyone to reflect on what worked and how the Hub was perceived. Here are just some of the comments from the public-

“Fantastic idea- just what our community needs!”

“What a wonderful and vibrant place to visit. Long may it continue.”

“Brilliant! What fun trying the drumming- an adopted Buddie.”

“There is really good information available with helpful staff and an excellent resource.”

“Keep breaking down the stigma!”

“Good to see mental health occupying a central position in Paisley.”



## What it Meant to Me

The regulars at The Hub were asked to say what The Hub had meant to them and here's what they had to say.....

Henderson Clark, Chief of the Hub....”The Hub provided a central information point on the Festival with hundreds of brochures being uplifted by the public. It also revealed a demand for information on “Mental Health” to be easily accessed in the

town centre. Hundreds of information booklets on mental health issues were uplifted especially during the first two week of The Hub opening.”

Jeanette Allan, Lead Occupational Therapist, Dykebar Hospital....” The Festival Hub has been a meeting place, a place of significant conversations, and information source and hosted lots of workshops and performances which have sparked creativity.”

Shena Milroy, Development Worker/Company Secretary, ACUMEN....” For me The Hub was a chance to meet old friends and make new ones. For ACUMEN it was a wonderful opportunity to be part of the local festival and to continue to raise awareness of mental health. The festival demonstrated that involvement in the arts, in whatever way, can have a positive effect on a person’s mental health and wellbeing.”

Tom Chalmers, Buddy Beat member- “The Festival Hub has been great for me personally, giving me a reason to get out more and given me confidence to speak to strangers. The Hub has reached and resonated with many local people and given Paisley town centre a real community buzz.”

Connor Muir, Wynd Up Drama Group and Buddy Beat....” The Festival Hub has helped build up my self confidence and I have made new friends.”

Hazel Borland, Buddy Beat member....” The Festival Hub has been a really enjoyable experience and it has been great to be a part of the Renfrewshire Mental Health Arts and Film Festival and to meet so many new people.”

John Green, Renfrewshire Recovery..... “At long last they are putting mental health to the forefront instead of hiding it in a dark corner.”

The Hub has meant many different things to different people and seems to have opened the need for a real resource like this in the town where people can come and find information about mental health. It has created its own community in the heart of a town centre that has seen better days and has been a real pleasure to have been involved.

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

