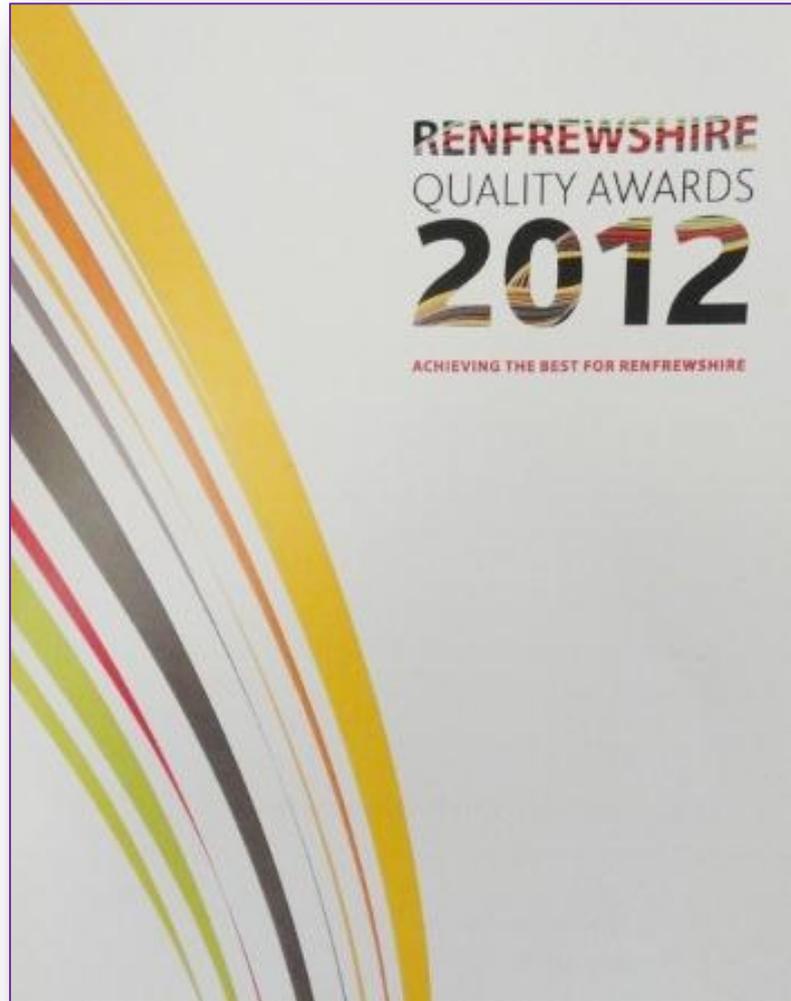




THE BUDDY BEAT

RENFREWSHIRE QUALITY AWARDS NIGHT



FEBRUARY 23RD 2012



When it was announced at the turn of the year that The Buddy Beat was shortlisted for a Renfrewshire Quality Award, a real sense of pride rippled through the group and the excitement began to build. Add into the mix our recent magnificent crowning as Scottish Epic Award Winners 2011, and you get a sense of how exciting this time of year is for the group.

First step towards a Quality Award took place on January 20th when the group had a ten minute pitch to a judging panel of five. This was immediately followed by questions from the panel and it is fair to say that we gave an excellent account of ourselves, even getting the panel to join in. The Renfrewshire Quality Awards celebrate the best of community planning and partnership working and is about showcasing and awarding innovation in delivering sustainable, efficient and effective services to the people of Renfrewshire.

And so the big night arrived. This prestigious event was held in Paisley Town Hall and with six categories overall, each with three nominees, there was a mighty 200 people in attendance. Buddy Beat was asked to play during the awards with a few minutes of performance and audience participation.



Awards nights don't often come along and quite rightly the gang signed up in their masses. Oh, and there was a wee surprise for Jeanette Allan, but more of that later.

The gang turned out in numbers and looked very dandy, with an unplanned purple/lilac theme throughout their finery and The Buddy Beat were-

Jeanette Allan, Karen Auld, Jane Bentley, Marion Bisland,

Allan Borland, Hazel Borland, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie,

Angie Gilmour, Mary Graham, Jackie McDowall, Eileen McGrory,

Jess McMillan, Christine Robertson, Sarah Van Der Molen, Noreen Young

We met at 5.00pm and had a chance to take our places on stage and have a run through. We had to share the stage with the Gryffe High Scholl Jazz Band, which was there to entertain everyone as they arrived. We were then shown to a side room where we set chairs out and ran through our set once again. It was time for the buffet, and with some tummies clearly rumbling- mentioning no names, Jess and Noreen- everyone trouped upstairs to take part in the bunfight.

The event itself started at 6.30 with a welcome from Provost Celia Lawson and introductory remarks by David Martin, Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council. Host for the evening was TV weatherman and Paisley Buddy Sean Batty (pictured right). First up we had two songs from Calum Macdonald a pupil at Gryffe High School. While Calum performed, we waited in the wings for our cue. Everyone whispered quietly and there was perhaps a touch of nervousness rippling through us. Hazel asked Tom "Was it as nervous as this in London for The Epic Awards?" to which Tom replied- "Not really but that might have been because we knew we had won!"

We trooped onstage and took our places. Buddy Beat have been putting together a new musical piece since the turn of the year and we decided to use this occasion to try it out, albeit a slightly abridged version. We have called this "Boomerang" for the simple reason that the beat starts with Jane and it sweeps around the group and then comes back to her before she changes the rhythm and then sends it around again. We had a few quick rhumbles before taking a deep breath. Jane kicked us off and turned her head to Jeanette who then joined in and turned to



Mary and so on as the beat built up around the circle, getting louder as it progressed. When it had reached Karen and Allan at the far side, Jane let the music flow a few moments before starting a second rhythm that involves a hand-clap. Once again, Jeanette was next in line and she switched her rhythm to match Jane's. The second rhythm worked its way around and the trick here is to keep playing the first until the second reaches you. As the beat made its way across the stage it took over completely and the sound of the hand-clapping sounded brilliant. Jane then split us into smaller groups and we played the different rhythms for a few moments before the end came- Jane ended with a powerful thump on the drum and each person in turn did the same until Allan ended with a mighty beat on the large Buddy Beat silver drum. The audience whooped their delight and we all looked rather pleased. Kudos to Jess, for she had never practised "Boomerang" until she had arrived at the Town Hall!



Jane then address the audience telling them it was "audience participation time- for no one gets to attend a Buddy Beat gig without joining in." Jane is a trooper at improvising and asked the audience to follow her lead by either using the table top as a drum or by

hand clapping and there then followed a wonderful few minutes of music. With Buddy Beat providing a gentle background beat, Jane asked everyone to echo what she was playing, and after a few seconds counted out the drums to let everyone hear the audience playing. We could see a few happy smiling faces closer to the stage, including Sean Batty. Bringing the drums back in Jane counted out the audience and repeated this several times, making the changeover time shorter and shorter. It bristled along and everyone was clearly having fun and we ended on a single beat. We received a very enthusiastic round of applause and as we filed off, Sean Batty was heard to say "My, that was very entertaining. I am always wary when someone says the words 'audience participation', especially when you are the one closest to the stage!" Jess looked delighted and remarked to Tom, "That was brilliant!"



We took our seats back in the hall and the awards began. There were six categories- Safer & Stronger, Wealthier & Farer, Greener, Smarter, Healthier and lastly One to Watch. After the nominees were read out a short film was shown of the three nominees in each category. Buddy Beat had to wait for the 5th

category Healthier, so we sat back to soak it all in, enjoying the wine and bottled water on offer.

The first category was Safer and Stronger and the winner was Safer Renfrewshire. The second category, Wealthier and Farer was won by Eco-Forms- Our Lady of Peace Primary School and three schoolchildren bounded on stage smiling like Cheshire cats while everyone raised the roof. In the Greener category the prize was taken by the Dog Fouling Campaign, and their promotional film certainly raised a few eyebrows! The Smarter prize was won by ASSERT and then it was our own category, Healthier.

Buddy Beat was up against Renfrewshire Adolescent Drug & Alcohol Resource (RADAR) and the Renfrewshire Mental Health Arts and Film Festival which was represented by Jeanette Allan and some Buddy Beat friends such as Maggi Boyd, Reuben Millward and Roisín Robertson. All worthy winners, and we watched nervously as the three promotional films were played. Buddy Beat managed to appear in the Mental Health Festival film and then our segment appeared. Our film "Keep the Beat" had been "sampled" and with a lot of photographs added in, the narrator explained who we are, what we have achieved, and even that we had reached the 100 gig milestone last year in Dykebar Hospital where the group began all those years ago. It was very impressive! The films ended and we all held our breath. Sean Batty announced "And the winner is..... The Renfrewshire Mental Health Arts & Film Festival!"

And so, we hadn't been victorious but we still cheered for the Festival as Jeanette and her posse took to the stage for the presentation and photographs. It was very deserved for all the work that the festival does and the many, many diverse activities staged each year which have reached out to thousands of people. Jeanette was quite rightly beaming and she will have had face ache the following morning, that's for sure! And Tom quietly thought, "Perhaps a little bit of that award is for Buddy Beat, because we play a major part in the festival every year!"

Maggi remained on the stage, as she had arranged to hi-jack the proceedings. Maggi and Roisín Robertson (one of the main stays on the Festival's Creative Forum) had wanted to recognise the fact that Jeanette had the rare distinction of being responsible for two of the three nominees in our category- Buddy Beat and The Renfrewshire Mental Health Arts and Film Festival. Maggi gave a heart-warming and passionate speech, pausing half-way through to ask Jeanette to join her on stage. Jeanette looked a little dazzled at first and then David Martín presented her with a bouquet of flowers, amid tumultuous applause. That was not the end of it, for Maggi had commissioned Tom to put together a short celebration film about Jeanette. This was a bigger secret than the whereabouts of Lord Lucan or Shergar, and the film began. Just two minutes long, to the soundtrack of "Don't Stop Believing", this was a salute to Jeanette with Buddy Beat photos and Festival photos placed alongside beautiful quotes from Buddy Beat's Anne and Roisín also. Tom watched from the wings and was amazed to see his wee film on a big

screen and the round of applause at the end was overpowering. No-one in Buddy Beat knew anything about to apart from Anne, and the look of surprise on the faces was a delight.

With that excitement over, Sean Batty resumed matters with the final category, 'One to Watch' which was won by the Persistent Offenders Project. There was one final award and Councillor Brian Lawson, Leader of Renfrewshire Council, announced the Leader's Choice Award which went to one of the twelve nominees who had been unlucky. This award went to Reaching Older Adults in Renfrewshire (ROAR).

And so that was the end of the evening. Or so we thought. We were surprised and delighted to receive a Finalist trophy, which is a beautiful carved glass ornament. We can all be very proud of reaching the final three in our category. We were able to perform our new piece which went down very well and the audience participation section was excellent and had a great atmosphere. We were also able to celebrate Jeanette and the Festival teams' worthy victory. All hail Queen Jeanette!



Left to right- Anne, Jess, Karen and Jane proudly show off our finalist award



A close up of our finalist award-fingers provided by Bentley Hand Models

Sean, watch out- Angie's about!



The awards season reaches its conclusion on Saturday 25th February, when some of the group will go long to The Provost Community Awards at The Glynhill Hotel in Renfrew where we have once again been shortlisted. Watch this space!

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24th February 2012

