

# Buddy Beat 2009



## What it meant to me

With contributions from;

Jeanette Allan, Jane Bentley, Allan Borland,  
Hazel Borland, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie,  
Mary Graham, Lesley King, Jackie McDowall,  
Eileen McGrory, Jess McMillan, Christine Robertson,  
Anne Ross, Sarah Van Der Molen, Noreen Young.



## From Amber to Green

It is a joy to be involved in Buddy Beat, such a great group of people who support each other and always welcome new members.

2009 for Buddy Beat was a realisation of a vision to see the group blossoming and increasingly taking responsibility for itself and its own activities. It has been encouraging to see people willing and ably taking on the roles of secretary, treasurer, chairperson and committee members.

Delighted that BB succeeded in getting funding to run sessions during the summer and developed their own set of new 'games'. Launching the monthly evening open session brings us (in social inclusion terms) from amber to green!

Jeanette



I feel that Buddy Beat is an important part in my life. 2009 has been a huge year for us all with more gigs/events than you could shake a stick at (and I don't mean The Stick of Power!). For me there have been several highlights.

In February we ventured to Leeds for a Recovering Ordinary Lives Conference but were beaten back by snow storms. Two weeks later we tried again and Jane's beloved Berlingo Van coughed and spluttered just over the border. Jane & I were towed to Gretna and waited 5 hours for the repairs to be made. Who knew you could have so much fun in Gretna? I now have an affinity with Jane's Berlingo. That was the 1<sup>st</sup> event I put together a report on, and what a wealth of material those 2 days gave me!

Then there was the truly unforgettable workshop at Frances' Tuesday Night Club in Milngavie back in May. There must have been around 40 adults with learning difficulties there and it was the most fun you could possibly have in an hour! It was exhilarating, it was hilarious and it was immensely rewarding. It still makes me giggle when I think back on it and I know many of us are eager to return there at some point.

The other event that hit the spot for me was in early October when some of us went with Jane to hold a workshop for Flexicare's Asbergers Teenage Social Club in Gallowhill, Paisley. That was a revelation for all of us. The boys were superb company and Fun with a Capital F was had by all. This kind of outreach work is what I think we should do more of.

I love compiling the reports on our goings on and if you didn't realise it by now, I like to take photographs when we are out and about. It just makes our stories come to life. I have two favourites from this year-



- On the speedboat on the River Clyde with Jane and Jeanette. Pure class! This photo should be on the wall in every Mental Health Ward in Scotland.



When I feel down, I only have to look at this killer photo and I am laughing again! We love you Noreen!



I entered this in The SeeMe Photo Competition. It didn't win (a travesty of justice!) but that doesn't stop this photo of Jane and Anne Dowie giving it large- an absolute smasher! I love it!

2009 has been full of events, no two of which have been remotely alike. There have been huge thrills and excitement and a barrow-load of laughs. The year was a huge journey for all of us and who would have guessed when they started drumming the road they would be taken along?

But what I feel is most important is the way our community has bonded and what great friends we have all become! I have pushed all my friends away over the years until I had none to speak of and not only

has Buddy Beat taught me that it is okay to have friends but also that it is also okay to keep them. That is priceless!

Tom



I have only been part of The Buddy Beat for 6 weeks and I have enjoyed the experience.

I always look forward to every Thursday to meet people with similar illnesses and have various discussions, which has helped me come to terms with my own illness.

I would like to thank all the staff for their time and effort and would recommend that it continues in the evenings in order for me to still attend when back in employment.

Regards

Jess



I first started in February 2009. I was very nervous on my first day and couldn't believe that I was going to play an African drum.

Everyone in the group made me feel very welcome and I was soon banging away on the drum. It felt really good. Soon the nerves settled and I began to feel more relaxed in a different way than I had before.

I really look forward to a Thursday morning drumming. At first I was just banging away, but slowly I began to learn more each week. Everyone in the group helped by giving me hints and suggestions and even complimented me which made me feel on top of the world. I was actually learning to play the drum and I just couldn't believe it.

Jane, our teacher was very good and patient when I asked lots of questions on how I could improve. She explained things to make drumming easier.

I have now been playing for 10 months and learning all the time.

My first gig was at The Nurses in Practice Conference in March at the SECC. It was very special and I will always remember it with excitement and pleasure. I was so nervous before I went on stage but I soon forgot when we started playing. All too soon it was over and we were heading back to the bus for home when Jeanette had a surprise for us. It was a trip on a speedboat down the River Clyde which was brilliant. I will always remember that special day forever.

Eileen



I have taken part in an amazing 17 Buddy Beat events in 2009. When did I ever find time to do my housework?

Buddy Beat is a huge part of my life. I love the caring and sharing and the beating away. Perhaps I am best at drumming up trouble, as Tom might say.

Buddy Beat has taken me all over the place during 2009- Leeds, Edinburgh, Perth and London!

I can't really pick a favourite event as I have loved them all, but those with people with learning difficulties stand out as the look on their faces is worth their weight in gold.

Anne Dowie



I joined Buddy Beat in January 2009. My first gig was in March when we played to a Nurses in Practise conference, and there were 500 people attending that day!

When I think back on my Buddy Beat year, I can't believe that I took part in 11 events. I note that I still await my performance fees though.

My favourite event was back in May at The Tuesday Club in Milngavie. Funnily enough, it was on a Tuesday night and it was a great atmosphere and everyone joined in.

I also enjoyed our meetings during the summer when we held our own weekly meetings for 6 weeks while Jane was away. We played some fun games and had a good time.

But perhaps the greatest achievement this year is the fact that I can now stand on my own two feet having been surgically removed from Anne Dowie!

Noreen



I honestly dread to think what I would be like if it was not for The Buddy Beat.

Of all the days of the week, my favourite has to be Thursday as it is then that I feel I have a purpose. There is a definite spring to my step when I go for the 9.15 bus to Paisley after I have checked that I have everything I need- especially my wee pouch that holds my rings. I have an assortment of things in that bag which all mean something precious to me- some Rowan berries, a piece of bark from a Silver Birch, a twig from an Elder, some sheep's wool and a couple of pebbles. Some people think of this as strange but I like these things about me and the drumming brings all these together for me.

In the group, I have found things that I thought I would never find again after I became ill; total acceptance, true friendship and amazing trust. When I lost my job I lost all of these but have gained so much more than I ever had before.

It is lovely to sit in the circle and know that no-one is going to judge me and quite often I sit with my eyes shut- this I can only do when I feel totally at ease. I also love to see a smile on someone's face when they listen to our music.

I have come a long way in the short while I have been in the group but every moment is special.

One of my favourite times was when Frances invited us to go to Milngavie to The Tuesday Club that she helps run. I felt so privileged to be there and didn't want our session to finish.

The Farmers Market was also very special especially when the young girl got her brother and parents to join in and then made up a game.

In the group age does not matter and we also know that we can go along for as long as we want- not having to leave after so many weeks or because we have reached "a certain age". It is without doubt, inclusive.

As one of my friends said to me after the open session at The Museum- “The Buddy Beat are the Heartbeat of Paisley”.

I can honestly say that it is my heartbeat and I just want to say a very big THANK YOU to everyone in the group as they are now my family.

Lesley/Paddington



I was fortunate to stumble into the Buddy Beat’s group when looking of ways to “chill-out” and meet like-minded people after a physical strain made a big change in my working life.

I’d been enjoying keeping busy but when life became a strain for the first time in many years I was delighted to stumble into Buddy Beat’s session; a warm friendly bunch of females with the odd “Tom” in attendance.

Soon my strain injury sorted and my brain nurtured into happiness again.

Mary



When I was in hospital, I had lost all my confidence and would not go to therapy to make music. The following year I met Anne Ross who befriended me. She was going to drumming in the Arts Centre and assured me there was no pressure - it was fun. So I decided to go with her and have a go, as well as enjoying her friendship.

It was a baptism of fire as I learned that in 2 weeks we were doing our biggest event yet - playing at the OT conference in Glasgow. Jane is amazing as is the support of Jeanette and Karen - our occupational

therapists and fellow members. Strong friendships have been formed as more have joined, and it is an important part of the group that we are "buddies". We share and care through the mountains and valleys of our personal journeys.

Now that we have gone on Jeanette's 'RED to AMBER to GREEN (now a charity going out to include the PUBLIC) - it has been a joy to visit a variety of venues during the year and to see sad and shy faces change as young and old join in with percussion, Boomwhackers and drums.

A personal thanks to Major Tom, Artie Anne and Paddington Lesley, our office bearers, for all the extra attention we receive. I'm sure we will go from strength to strength. I pray that those who are too poorly to be with us will turn the corner and be able to join us again soon. Each one is missed.

Christine



Buddy Beat 2009 meant a variety of places for the group. We were invited to the Bi-polar Conference in Perth which was held at the Dewar Centre and was very interesting.

We also were invited to Edinburgh for the launch of the Mental Health Arts Festival and one of the highlights of the BBC's What Makes You Smile day in Edinburgh was Graeme Obree - The Flying Scotsman who gave a talk on his illness, ways of dealing with it and his cycling.

Last year meant to me a great crowd of people with plenty of support and plenty of drumming.

Sarah



There's loads I could be writing about how well people have learned to drum together, how welcoming the group is to new people, and how much you all show genuine care for each other, but this picture really sums up for me how far we've gone together as a group, and where we've got to.

In the face of all the “stuff” that everyone has to deal with, we're a group that's not afraid to dance in the streets together!! I think it's a brilliant symbol of the power of friendship and community, and getting a right good groove on.



Jane



This year in The Buddy Beat has been very busy, & we’ve played at loads of gigs, especially during the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival. There have been so many performances to choose from that were full of laughs and fun that it’s really hard to choose. Thinking things over my favourite time was at the Paisley Farmer’s Market at the start of the festival.

This time I knew what we were in for and that made it easier to begin with. We were assured of an audience and they had heard us playing last year so we knew there would be many willing participants. The day started out very well by being kind to us with the weather. It wasn’t roasting and the sun didn’t shine in our eyes which meant everyone could see everyone else, which is very important especially when Jane stands up and does her thang! There were no clouds on the horizon either so we wouldn’t be rained off, particularly since there was no awning to protect us.

Jane at the ready, Beaters in fine fettle, audience gathering, we began to play. No tentative steps here but good strong, confident playing from everyone and smiles.... Yes, the smiles abounded, not only from the players but from stallholders and shoppers alike. We soared..... everyone in their stride. There were many family and friends joining the group and in particular two grandchildren who played their parts

brilliantly. Last year we had a wonderful old lady, Elizabeth, come play along with us and this year she didn't disappoint and had us all singing along to her favourite song, Moon River. The singing brought other spectators along.

The highlight for me was when a lovely family came along, Mum and Dad with two children, a boy and a girl. The little boy was very shy but the girl had the audience in her hands. She lit up the whole proceedings even though it was sparkling already with her bright smile and her steady beat. We made up games to play but she had her own ideas and had us all doing as we were told. A seven year old child leading The Buddy Beat confidently, and involving her brother and parents too. Her parents were so proud of her and rightly so.

We all played an introduction for the rest of the group to join in but by far the best response was set off by our child star by playing tap tap taaap tap tap taaap just like the famous rock group Queen in We Will Rock You. The response was amazing..... drummers drumming, audience singing, we will, we will, rock you! Mum and Dad glowed with pride in their daughter who brought such fun and laughter to County Square.

The best thing about The Buddy Beat is the interaction between us. We know that there is always a friendly face to smile at you, an ear open to listen, a hand to hold when you need comfort. Such kindness and caring is hard to find in this world but we have it and we are good at sharing. You can be assured of the best people giving out much more than they take in, that is the Best of The Buddy Beat.

Anne Ross



This is my favourite Buddy Beat Photo from 2009, taken at the end of the Bipolar Fellowship of Scotland's Annual Conference on the steps of the Dewar Centre in Perth. We all look so happy and relaxed. It was a huge day out for us and very enjoyable.

Buddy Beat has been the most positive thing for me during 2009. Everyone has been so welcoming and friendly. I enjoy it as there is no right or wrong in drumming and no one sits in judgement. I enjoy bashing away on the drums and getting involved.

At first I was unsure about my drumming and have been helped by Jane and I also found that when Jane instructed people in workshops or audiences on how to drum, it was a great help to me and my confidence. My favourite event was in October at The Town Hall in Paisley when we played for 20 minutes or so at The Renfrewshire Disability Forum Relaunch. We were on our own that day and Tom did a great job and the response we got at the end was amazing.



Jackie



I joined Buddy Beat-I think it must have been about April 2009, after hearing my friend Lesley talking about it. She said a few times to come along - so finally I took the plunge. It was the best thing I have done, and I now have a special group of friends to spend my lunch times with. Buddy Beat has given me an outlet for some of the stress, anxiety and frustration in my daily life, not only with depression but also because I have fibromyalgia and chronic back pains due to prolapsed discs. When I am drumming, I often go into a semi-meditative state, especially during free-play which is my favourite part of a Thursday morning - that's not to say I don't enjoy the games & exercises - but I do prefer just being able to lose myself with the drum beat. My first public outing was for the NHS event at the SECC, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, although I was a bit nervous about performing in public - but it was the after-activities which really pushed me beyond my limits when we went for the boat ride up the Clyde. When Jeanette mentioned a boat-ride on the bus, I thought initially she was meaning the river boat between Glasgow & Braehead, so it was a bit of a shock to realise it was a speedboat ...as I have a fear of boats & being on water!! But not wanting to be the only one not to take part I went ahead & somehow managed to get onboard & onto my seat (which could have been a bit lower in my opinion). So off we went ... and to my utter shock & surprise ... I LOVED IT!!! In fact, I enjoyed it so much that next time we take Niki up north to see the dolphins we're hoping to take her out on one of the dolphin watch boats, which use similar speedboats. That day was also the day that Tom took the photo that sums up how often I use my mobile, as I am walking through the SECC texting.



Other favourites include all the Arts & Film Festival events, particularly the opening event and the Choir at the Students Union. The open event at County Square was also a favourite ... especially when the young girl joined in and almost took over, arranging her own games and leading us all ... a Buddy Beat star in the making! I also thoroughly enjoyed the day over at Edinburgh for the BBC event. Looking forward to Buddy Beat starting back in 2010 along with which I am sure there will be many more happy memories to treasure. Thank you to Lesley for encouraging me to join, and thank you to Jane & everyone else for making me feel so welcome and for becoming such good friends.

Hazel



I joined buddy beat during the summer, going along with my wife Hazel and our friend Lesley. I had just been diagnosed with depression and had lost my job because of my health ... their easy get out clause was I was on a 3 month probationary period, and my time keeping & standards of work weren't acceptable. So I went along one Thursday with Hazel not knowing what to expect really - and one of that day's games was to dance round in a circle??? I had done some shamanic drumming with a bodhran previously, but this was my first time with a djembe. I enjoyed it so much - I came back the 2nd week, despite the dancing. My favourite drum has become the big red one as I like to sit and just keep the beat going - all I need now is a pair of drumsticks! Buddy Beat has become a focus in my life, and means that at least one day a week I am making the effort to get up, get dressed and out the house before lunchtime. One of my highlights is doing the opening to the Arts & Film Festival, and another is our day over in Edinburgh with the BBC. I have also of course made a new group of friends who can offer support and understanding when you are having a bad day. I am looking forward to 2010 and more Buddy-Beating.

Allan

A big thank-you to everyone who contributed to make this review so special and we all hope that 2010 will be just as much fun and as memorable as 2009 as been.

Cheers!