



West African Drum and Dance Group

41 Jesmond Vale

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www.drummedup.org

new members welcome at all times

Drummed Up Activities Report 2006/2007 and ONWARDS ...

Prepared by Mark Barfoot and members of the
Drummed Up Community Drumming Group.

“The best thing to me is the way
Drummed Up has improved the
lives of so many people”

Mark B

Drummed Up ... Welcome

We have had a busy couple of years. Several members travelled to Senegal and Gambia in January 2006. In addition to drumming, we now have traditional African dance as part of our performance and weekly sessions. We have welcomed guest teachers from Senegal and Guinea to our sessions and have strengthened links with the West African drumming community across the UK.



In Autumn 2006, 58 people attended a single Thursday session, some travelling from Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hexham, Consett and Durham. We consistently have upwards of 25 people attending, making Drummed Up the biggest West African Drumming group in the UK!



Thanks are due to those who volunteer for the management committee, teach the sessions, transport drums and people around, book gigs, help with refreshments, administrative duties and for everyone who is committed to seeing the group continue to succeed into the future. WELL DONE!

Drummed Up ... Background

Drummed Up was formed in the Summer of 2002 with the help of Bob Malpiedi (Activities 4 Health) and Simon Wood (West City Project, Newcastle City Council). The group was constituted as an independent group in July 2004. Since then, the group has performed in Hall 1 of SAGE, Gateshead, Newcastle Green Festival, St James Park, The Great North Run, Newcastle University, L'Afrique in Newcastle and about 200 other events across the region.



We constantly welcome new members from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and are very much a community drumming group as well as a performance group.



In addition to performances, the group serves a hugely valuable role in many member's lives. Drummed Up is an opportunity to meet new people, be creative musically but also through crafts and dance, receive training, learn committee skills, build self-confidence and self-esteem and become a member of a thriving community.

We organise residential trips for members once or twice per year and have travelled to Alnmouth, Cumbria, North Northumberland and even Somerset. These are opportunities for people to get to know each other better and eat together as well as drum together.



Since our initial set up funding to purchase equipment and pay for our first 18 months rent, Drummed Up has received no external funding. Our success lies in the enormous contribution of time, skills and resources of our members and generating income from performances.

Drummed Up ... Activities and Highlights

In Jan 2006 and Feb 2007, several members financed their own trips to Senegal and Gambia to work with drum and dance teachers. As a result we support the charity Kombo Silla – which is a grassroots organisation supporting health and education projects in Gunjur, Gambia. Some members have returned on several occasions and have built up strong connections with both people and places in Gambia and Southern Senegal.



A major development in the group is the introduction of traditional and al dance into both our performances our Thursday sessions.

This has added a whole new dimension to the group and more and more people are starting to dance. West African music is the oldest dance music in the world!



We have continued to support charitable causes over the years. We performed at a fund-raiser for a well in Africa for World Aids Day, for legal costs for the family of a local man killed in Greece and Newcastle Community Green Festival where we built our own African village and raised money for Kombo Silla.

We often perform at events promoting social cohesion and youth inclusion and recently performed at St James' Park for the third time for "Give Racism the Red Card".

Drummed Up ... The Future 2007 and ONWARDS ...

Drummed Up has several challenges to face.

To sustain a membership of more than 80 people and a weekly attendance averaging 30 will be quite a challenge.

We have several members with range of special needs, three of whom attend with carers. We must pay close attention to the needs of all members and perhaps may require extra resources and training to fulfil them.

We will need to attract funding to pay for session tutors to support the learning of members and plan the future learning within the group.

We will need to support the development of dance through working with experienced dance teachers.

We will need to maintain and replace our stock of drums and percussion.

We would like to inspire the membership with further visits by visiting Master drummers.

Drummed Up understands that it serves a valuable place in the local and city-wide communities and that at the heart of the group are committed enthusiastic members who are determined to see the group thrive and continue to grow and develop.



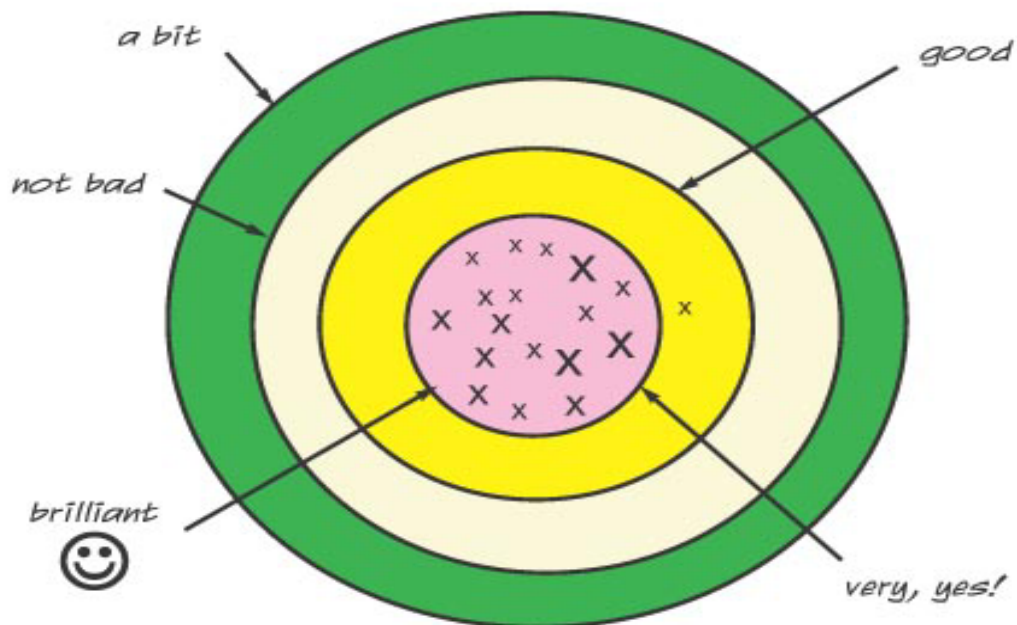
Drummed Up ... 2007 Survey Results

What do you get from being a Drummed Up member?
Here are the answers from the group!

VOTE for your FAVOURITE Drummed Up things:

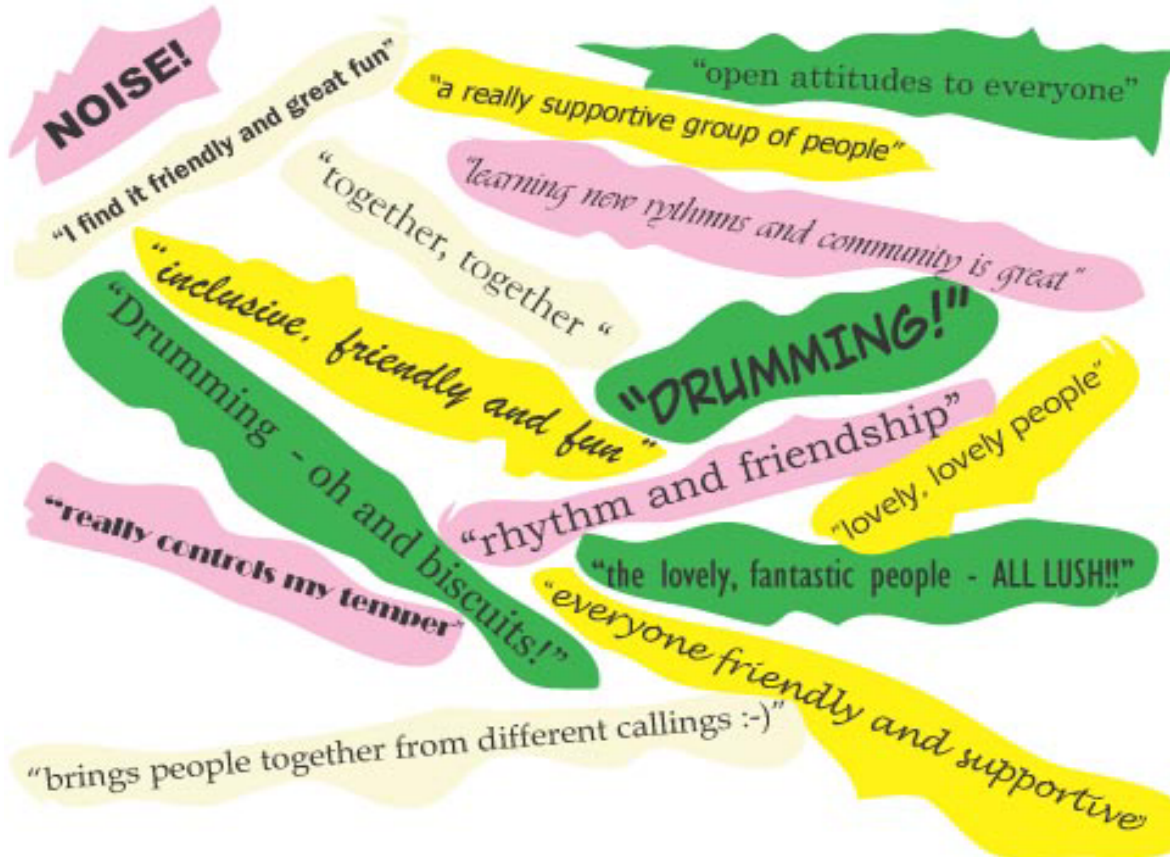


IS Drummed Up an INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY GROUP experience?



Drummed Up ... 2007 Survey Results Continued ...

WHAT do you LIKE BEST about Drummed Up?



WHAT positive thing do you get from being a DRUMMER?

never thought I could play music .. now I CAN... It keeps me SANE ...It gives me ENERGY... It gives me HAPPINESS and feeling part of a COMMUNITY ... A chance to be part of a drumming GROUP ... HIGHPOINT of my week ... Clears my head - gets rid of anxiety - tests my MUSICAL SKILLS to the limit... A chance to connect... GROUP work - totally love it ... Ethna enjoys the sounds of the RYTHMS and taking part where she is ABLE....

Drummed Up ... 2007 September Chair Report

It could be said that this year has been our best yet, we have drummed, danced and sung our way almost to the brink of exhaustion, playing just about every weekend from April to September, sometimes doing four gigs a day.

As well as our regular venues like The Ship Inn, The Tanners and The Newcastle Green Festival, we have performed at many new places. Deserving special mention are; the 'Liberte' collaboration at Dance City, marking 200 years since the abolition of slavery, Blackhall Mill summer fair, with spontaneous African song afterward at Sam's housewarming. And of course, the Leeds Carnival in conjunction with the African Association where we played to our biggest audience ever. The carnival banners that the group made will be on display at the AGM

It is no small relief to see that the gig bookings are thinning-out and that it is now time to take stock of our situation.

The taught sessions at Jesmond Vale continue every Thursday under the steady instruction of Mark Barfoot, there being a regular flow of beginners of all ages and backgrounds, who soon discover the wonder of African drumming and dance. The only change being that we now ask for a small voluntary contribution toward costs.

The hard worked stock of drums is holding up, but only just and will need attention soon, a matter for the new committee to address.

The organisation of the group has been efficiently carried out by the present committee*, many members of which are standing again for the coming year. Many thanks to the officers and members of the committee whose unseen hard work would only be noticed if it were not done and problems started to arise.

In the past year we have up-rated our public liability insurance in line with the City Councils requirements and added equipment insurance.

We have become members of Making Music, a well established national body representing and supporting the needs of voluntary music groups of all types.

We were used as a case study in the North East Social Capital Forum's Booklet 'Connected and Collective' a guide to social capital.

THE FUTURE

Our co-operation with the North East African Association continues: we are currently applying for funding for a longer term project which will culminate **at the Leeds Carnival 2008.**

We have initiated plans to bring more Drum and Dance tutors to the group from outside of the North East. We are aiming to enrich the wider cultural base of the group by introducing more song and potentially storytelling.

It is hoped that the monthly community meals can be re-started this autumn in an effort to include members who cannot travel to our residential weekends which are held twice a year. Both events are a good opportunity to reflect on the past, gaining an understanding of where the mind of the group is, and where it would like to be.

All of these events and activities clearly state that Drummed Up continues to be open and inclusive, always looking for fresh ways to improve the lives of members and those in the wider community, as well as maintaining good performance standards and carrying a sense of fun and excitement wherever we go.