



**REPORT on Music and Storytelling Project with the Friday Futures group (for People Living with Dementia), May-June 2023  
In Evanton Community Wood (by the Cabin)  
Led by Lizzie MacDougall, storyteller and Alpha Munro, musician  
Funded by Tasgadh**

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Traditional Arts Small Grants

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## **Introduction**

The mini project was part of the regular Friday sessions held in Evanton Community Wood with People Living with Dementia. It took place over 6 Fridays, the final one being a ceilidh to which others were invited (and around 65 in total attended). Regular participants numbered between 7 and 12; the average being 8.6. Tea/coffee on arrival and lunch were part of each session. Several volunteers assisted with each session.

Our primary aim was that all the participants enjoyed themselves as well as finding the sessions stimulating, motivating, and engaging. Whilst the community ceilidh was the final outcome, the interaction during the music and story sessions was more important.

Lizzie and Alpha developed together the content of their work over a few weeks beforehand through discussion and sharing of ideas. They started the project with a joint workshop followed by individual workshops to focus on the music/song writing (Alpha) and the storytelling elements (Lizzie) as well as focussing on how we enjoy coming to the woods using the images created in a recent textile art project (Lizzie).

Lizzie and Alpha kept in contact to create a performance programme that would share the joy the group feel about coming to the woods through our music, song writing. The chosen music was stimulating and relevant and we gently worked with the group to stimulate the music making, story ideas to overcome any nervousness about the performance.

## **Set List**

1. Body warm up using claps, pats, and stamps to the four parts of the fiddle jig 'Paddy's Leather Breeches' played by Alpha
  2. Vocal warm up imagining a sound quilt using random notes for Ah, Me, and Oh.
  3. Mango Song with body percussion
  4. Rock Around the Clock with percussion arrangement (Chorus and Verse)
  5. Chluinn mi na h-eòin, 's binn leam na h-eòin, (Chorus with arrangement: hummed and sung to La as well as accompanied on tuned table harp, resonator bells and played on metallophone)
  6. Song created by the Group to Loch Lomond Melody
  7. Ossian Story included fiddle air Ossian's Lament (based on Song of the Deer) played by Alpha on fiddle while Margo played a tuned table harp, the rest of the group percussion played percussions and resonator bells.
  8. Ceilidh Dance plus fiddle accompaniment
- Instruments used by Group: table harps, African drums, cymbal, metallophone, resonator bells, small percussion eg. shakers, bells, windchimes sticks etc. Alpha used fiddle and guitar.

## Stories shared

With Rock around the Clock: Two of the participants shared stories about going to the dancing with their winklepicker stiletto heels in their hand bag and changing there for the dancing, and the need to put newspaper into to the pointy toes to stop them curling up.

### **Cabin Song to Loch Lomond Melody**

(Written by the Friday Group 2023. This song describes the Friday Groups' regular activities)

By woods and by dells  
Where we find the bluebells,  
And woodpeckers drumming on tree trunks,  
We'll meet with our friends  
In the cabin by the burn  
And have soup by the fire that is warming.

And we'll feed the robin  
And he'll sing a song,  
And ceilidh round the table together.  
We'll paint, sew and chat  
And the Friday hours will go  
Sipping tea and eating cake in the sunshine.

### **Chluinn mi na h-eòin/ Listen to the birds**

Annick wrote a wee story about the Robin

### **Ossian' Tale:**

The key phrases in the Ossian Tale for musical accompaniment

'The dogs started running': sticks

'There was magic in the air': resonator bells

Deer: windchimes

The Gaelic phrases for the feasting and toasting said by all

- Glè mhath
- A h-uile duine
- Slàinte Mhath

The Group then sang chorus of Tha Mi Sgith.

**Kiltearn Primary** One pupils, who had been sitting and watching patiently, sang 2 songs, Over The Rainbow and You are My Sunshine. Kiltearn P4/5 then sang The Song My Mother Told Me. P1 shared paintings they had made of suns and rainbows with the Friday group.

## The Friday group did the Cabin Jig made up by volunteer Penny

The participant group really enjoyed themselves (although one couple who came part way through the project decided the participatory element was not for them).

### Some comments:

*'When we could do it again?' (Annik)*

*'Very enjoyable time was had by all' (Joanna)*

*'It was brilliant' (Margo)*

John, another attendee recently moved to the locality, said how much he enjoyed the ceilidh.

Joanie Whiteford, Lord Lieutenant, wrote: *"I joined in with The Friday Futures Ceilidh in Evanton Wood Community Company with Alpha Munro and Lizzie McDougall yesterday. The woodland was bathed in sunshine, the birds were singing, the Friday Futures group were playing their musical instruments, singing and dancing along to Alpha's beautiful music. Children from Kiltearn Primary joined in the fun, singing their songs and joined in the dancing, while Lizzie captivated everyone with her stories. No one will forget Ossian. What a very special community event, and all thanks to these wonderful volunteers."*

The film of the event (less the children's participation) is here on YouTube

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=Icc0Ir1WNRw&feature=share8>

**Volunteer helpers:** Blandine Lynch, Adrian Clark, Penny Gray, Frances Lesley





AC, LM, AM 21.6.23