

The Buteman

Friday, March 27, 2009

Jim helps pupils spin a yarn

WHAT, exactly, is a Celtic Yarn Spinner? Is it someone with a treadle, a ball of wool and a Scots-Irish bloodline?

Or perhaps a teller of tall tales? Or a mixture of the two, maybe?

We were summoned to St Andrew's Primary this week to find out - and on arriving, were more than a little puzzled when it appeared to be neither.

We found pupils from St Andrew's and North Bute chanting along to a beat being marked out on an unusual-looking drum, and only when the echoes died away did it become clear that guest Jim MacCoo's yarn-spinning was definitely of the storytelling variety.

Unable to stay long, we nonetheless heard a series of mysterious Hebridean tales, mixtures of fact and folklore, that had Jim's young audience hanging on his every word. Jim himself is described as "a British dramatic poet in the shanachie or travelling bard tradition", combining storytelling with poetry and song and, yes, Celtic drum-

