

Something to Celebrate



So what's Mandy de Winter doing standing behind a table of cakes looking for all the world as if she's running the baking stall at a fete? Those are tenth birthday cakes (all baked by Jenny Collins, thanks Jenny!). But surely Mandy's a wee bit more than ten? Hasn't she just celebrated 25 years of teaching circle dance? Yes, but here's another celebration.

It's hard to believe, but Mandy has been coming up to lead a midsummer weekend of dance at St Andrews, organised by Central Scotland Circle Dance, for the last ten years. And what a wonderful time it has always been. There are a core of ten of us who've been there every time and more who've come most years and yet every year we welcome some new people into this special circle for this special season.

But this piece is not just about extolling something that has already taken place, though of course I do that, but it's also about celebrating the values of continuity and repetition and taking those values forward in the future, even if, or even precisely because, they may seem out of step with the pace of modern living. The very fact that this group of thirty dancers has a core has meant that as a whole group we've grown each year, grown in depth I would say, in the readiness and willingness to

go deeper into the dance. And OK we can chat vociferously, but we can also hold the space in silence for the dance to go on working, so it becomes an even richer experience. It's also, I believe, a very hospitable group, with newcomers able to feel a part of it very easily. We all of us want to attract new people to circle dancing, let's not forget it's not just the individuals present, but the extraordinary power of all the dancers coming together that makes circle dancing different and so special to us and hopefully attractive to newcomers.

Over a weekend there's the luxury of having time to repeat dances, time to learn ones that might seem difficult at first and repeat them and begin to relax into them, so there's no need to be daunted. Mandy's gentle but precise teaching style gives us all a chance to find our way into every kind of dance.

St Andrews is both ancient, as a religious centre and having the oldest university in Scotland, and young, all those students; intimate in scale and formal in layout; the home of golf and by the sea, with that long long beach that featured in Chariots of Fire. A great holiday destination.

So I look forward to dancing there again with Mandy next midsummer (20-22 June 2014) so if you've never ventured, come and experience for yourself the joys I've been describing - a warm welcome awaits you!

Diana Treffry
CSCD member