

## Francesca Stridgen and 'A Flavour of Findhorn' August 2016

It was good to have Francesca back in Auchterarder after a gap of two years. 'A Flavour of Findhorn' had first been scheduled for August 2015 but due to an injury Francesca was unable to come that year. So it was after this year's Festival of Sacred Dance, Music and Song, marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bernhard Wosien's first visit to Findhorn that we had our little taste of what happens there.

Francesca brought with her a photograph taken at the 2014 Festival that showed the resident dance teachers Laura Shannon, Peter Vallance and Susanne Anders Bartholomai along with that year's guest Piry Krakow.

The guest teacher for 2016 was Nanni Kloke and Francesca aimed to give us at least one dance that would have been taught (or even choreographed by) each of these teachers. Eighteen dancers came for the session held in the afternoon of August 28<sup>th</sup> at Three Kings' Hall, Ochil Tower School in Auchterarder.

Francesca spoke about the different aspects of the festival, the opportunities to sing in the choir, join the scratch band or to dance from morning until night!

She also gave us some insights into the different teachers and their commitment: whether travelling to research traditional dances or choreographing and teaching new ones along with the awareness and integrity the different teachers bring to their teaching and training courses.

We danced Trehantiraki (The Little Boat) and Hora la Galana from the new CD 'Limani' by Laura and Kostantis. We danced Roma dances that Piry had introduced in 2014 and also Peter's choreography to Om Namah Shivaya.

Peace of the Healing Light (choreographed by Nanni Kloke) is a powerful yet accessible dance that I was very glad to dance again. Francesca's skilful teaching of both the steps and the context and meaning of the dances was greatly appreciated. A dancer who had been at the Festival for the first time this year wrote:

*'It was lovely to be taught Deep Peace again, in a more peaceful environment, and with room to really stretch without fear of dunting anyone. Hats off to Francesca for teaching it from memory....wow! The other dances were a real flavour of Findhorn too.'* Pamela

Another dancer who was encountering these dances for the first time wrote:

*'I really enjoyed Sunday. I liked how Francesca wanted to give a strong sense of the dance and really get the feel of it, it was very grounding. Francesca has wisdom and empathy that came over very strongly to me.'* Stella

I, for one, shall be looking forward to my next trip to Findhorn Festival, where on the final evening we dance to live music and singing by the choir as well as welcoming Francesca back for her annual visit!

Keryn Evely