

Chairperson's Report: AGM Sat 11 November 2017

On starting to write this report, I have realised this is my 5th year as Chairperson, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the committee for their support, help and encouragement since I first took over the role.

I am aware of a feeling of progress since my first CSCD meeting back in 2011. I like to think that CSCD has matured and flourished in those intervening years and will continue to do so in years to come. On my travels around the country over the past six years to attend various Circle Dance weekends and events, I am always pleasantly surprised and pleased to be congratulated and envied by other dance teachers on how agreeable it must be to plan and organise events within the supportive framework of a committee. We are indeed lucky to be in that happy position.

Sad news

We have all been very saddened to hear of Ben's recent death, which leaves a huge gap in our meetings and at our dance events. I have only known Ben for the past six years, which is a relatively short time compared with others on the committee. Ben always struck me as a kindly gentle soul and a true gentleman in every sense of the word. Ben will be sadly missed by us all.

We have been dismayed to learn of Mandy's illness this year and it has made me realise what an enormous impact she has had on Circle Dancing here in Scotland. We all wish her well and shall hope to continue the legacy she gifted to us with her lovely Midsummer Dance weekends in St Andrews.

Dance events

We've had a very successful year with 7 dance events being held since our last AGM in October 2016. All events have been well supported and very much enjoyed by dancers, averaging a healthy 25-35 at each event. Our pattern of having a visiting teacher twice a year, a summer residential weekend, a teachers' practice day, and an Autumn Share Day has continued to work well. We even managed to fit in an extra visiting teacher in October this year, and still sustained enough dancers for our Autumn Share Day.

Our visiting teachers have been full of praise for our organisation, our hospitality and the enthusiasm and willingness of our dancers to embrace all kinds of dances. It is also pleasing to know that there are a growing number of teachers who wish to be invited to teach for CSCD.

We have been successful in trying out two new venues since our last meeting. It is especially valuable to have a new source of venues that are centrally situated for all our dancers.

Our groups

Our groups are growing in number and are well supported by our loyal dancers. It is gratifying to read about them on the website and to realise that people can now dance in central Scotland every day of the week, (Sunday through to Friday), if they so wish and also attend occasional special events on Saturdays.

Links with other groups

Thanks to our website and FB pages we've formed links with other Circle Dance communities, such as Circle Dancing for All, and Circle Dance Ireland. We have also established valuable links with dancers and teachers from individual groups. This interaction and contact with others on the network is important and something to be encouraged. I am especially pleased that we now have a dance group in Edinburgh after a gap of many years and although the group is small at the moment, I hope that linking with CSCD will encourage its growth.

Future progress

It would be better if we could encourage young people to take an interest in our Circle Dance groups. When I recently danced with Renata Ramos, I was struck by the huge cultural difference between dancing in the UK and dancing in Brazil. Renata told us that in Brazil it is the young people who are the driving force behind Circle Dance groups. They embrace both the music and the dancing and make it their own. Renata has done much to encourage young people, including socially disadvantaged children, to take part in her dance events all over the country.

Along with the growing ages of our dancers, we need to also consider the growing ages of our teachers. To this end, I feel we need to do more to encourage younger dancers to think about becoming teachers. I have been very impressed with Jenny Oswald's recent achievement in training six new dance teachers who have successfully started their own groups. I feel that between us, we CSCD teachers have a wealth of knowledge and experience to pass on to new teachers. I am wondering if we too, as a committee, should consider how we can make teacher training something that we embrace.

And so the dance lives on and long may CSCD continue to further its cause. Let's give ourselves a well-deserved round of applause for all that we have achieved.