

Judy Harvey's Road to the Isles

On the road to the isles Judy certainly led us *Over the Hills*, into the *Skye Boat Song* and eventually onto the *Dark Isle*, but this was also a journey in all sorts of other ways - through dance - through life.

It began the moment each of us arrived (after our journeys, long or short, to Cupar) with warm greetings from Judy and on all the cafe tables she had arranged quotations from prose and poetry on the theme of journeying to set us in the mood.

Judy had created a striking centrepiece: on a turquoise cloth there was a vase of flowers, white and pale lavender, with some turquoise fronds; a plaid ribbon wound between three amethyst crystals; the candle was placed on a piece of weathered wood.

Once we'd started dancing and been introduced to Lesley Laslett's *Anticipation*, Judy shared with us how circle dancing had been a life-saver for her after a breakdown. And in recognition of the power of the dance, we were touched when she brought Mandy so beautifully into the circle with the recording of her singing a traditional Macedonian song to which we danced.

We did a number of partner dances: an energetic *Tarantella del villaggio*; *Alongside*, in which we moved apart as if round an obstacle, together again and onto another partner. There was great hilarity in Judy's own *Ashokan Farewell*, when for the first time we did a grand chain and then went back the way we'd come; many journeys not being straightforward!

Several dances involved changes of direction, such as going backwards in the line of dance or out of the circle - all hints at the unexpected twists and turns of life.

Among her own choreographies that Judy brought was one to the Enya song, *So I could find my way*, her personal thank you to circle dance. And we all had good reason to be grateful to the dance and to Judy for leading us on such a special journey on the Road to the Isles.

Inspired by Judy I found a Hafiz poem and here is the last part (translated by Daniel Ladinsky), with which I think we all agree...

Oh keep squeezing drops of the Sun
From your prayers and work and music
And from your companions' beautiful laughter
And from the most insignificant movements
Of your own holy body.

Now, sweet one,
Be wise.
Cast all your votes for Dancing!