

The beginnings of CSCD

Central Scotland Circle Dance was 'born' out of Strathendrick Circle Dance which itself came into being in 2001 (I believe).

However, circle dance had been happening in this part of Scotland a good 10 years beforehand. In 1990 Caroline Cuthbert was on a course at Findhorn with Anna Barton called Meditation in Movement. Irene Townson was also on that course and has confirmed the following. Caroline invited Anna to teach a day in Stirling with view to Caroline taking the sessions after that. People came to the day by word of mouth. Subsequently Caroline decided to hold the days of dance at her home Old Ballikinrain. This was a large, faded pink mansion in beautiful grounds, west of Stirling, near to Balfron.

I was fortunate to discover Caroline and circle dance in the summer of 1994, through my friend Joyce Whitelaw. That day (and whenever weather permitted) the dancing was outside. But more often it was held in Caroline's spacious drawing room with the carpet rolled up and the ancestors looking down on us.

The first meeting of Strathendrick Circle Dance, that I have minutes of, was held in May 2002 at Old Ballikinrain. At that meeting were Jenny Oswald (chairperson) Willie Oswald, Caroline Cuthbert, Margot Lynch, Keryn Evely, Simon Goodare, Irene Townson, Diana Treffry and Claire Cushing. (Apologies came from Joyce Whitelaw and Liise Findlay)

Already there was a residential event we had arranged with Judy King (to be at Wiston Lodge nr Biggar, June 2002), a weekend with Hennie Konings (April 2003) was in the pipeline and we were in discussion with Mandy de Winter to lead a residential weekend in 2004. The hunt for the perfect venue was/is ongoing!

Other dance teachers who came in our early days were Andy Bettis (Feb 2003) and Stefan and Bethan (Oct 2003). Jenny and I were also leading dance days individually that year too.

By 2004 the committee were Caroline (now chairperson) Jenny, Ben Bailey, Keryn, Simon, Irene, Diana and Joyce. That year our first midsummer St Andrews event with Mandy de Winter took place.

In 2006 Caroline suggested a renaming of Strathendrick Circle Dance and that is when it became Central Scotland Circle Dance and there is the first mention of a website.

In 2007 we (the Scottish Team) undertook production of the Grapevine for three years. The production team included some of the CSCD team (Jenny, Willie, Caroline, Keryn and Irene) along with Sheila Robertson from Gorebridge, nr Edinburgh, Moyra Carlyle in Orkney and Marion Elliott then living in Forres.

Since then, the number of teachers and groups have expanded and the website, under the care of Jenny Collins, has flourished and become something to be really proud of.

The beginnings of CSCD, continued . . .

Subsequent chairpersons, Diana, Rose Cross and Lynne Barlow have led CSCD and along with the other committee members (Maria Miller needs a special mention here as treasurer and St Andrews coordinator) we have continued to organise events and hopefully fulfil the original aims:

To promote international understanding through learning and dancing together the dances of many countries.

To promote circle dancing through excellence of teaching.

To provide affordable circle dance events.

And the objectives:

To arrange and coordinate an annual programme of dance events in a variety of locations, mainly in Central Scotland, in order to bring together and introduce a wide range of people to Circle Dance.

To elect a committee annually to organise the forthcoming year's programme of meetings, manage funds and correspond with members.

As remembered by Keryn Evely, July 2023