

AN INVITATION An email dropped into my inbox this month from Rosa about the Spring Grapevine, “might you be willing to submit an article, a story, a poem, a letter, a photo, a memory, your hopes and fears for the network?” Well, thank you Rosa, what a wonderful invitation and so I had this ‘crazy idea’ to try and cover them all but whether I can or not, remains to be seen.

Let’s start with **an article**, which I guess this is, so that’s the first box ticked. As a child, I was always encouraged to write thank you letters for my Christmas presents. Father Christmas gave me a SAD lamp this year. I really think it ought to be marketed with a better name because it doesn’t make you sad at all, in fact it does just the opposite. I have basked under its sunny glow at my desk ever since Christmas and in fact it is beaming down on me right now as I write to you. It is amazingly close to feeling like sitting in the light of the sun.

A story – my dictionary gives the definition of a story, as a narrative, either true or fictitious, in prose or verse, designed to interest, amuse, or instruct the hearer or reader.

So dear reader, I will tell you the story of what has kept me going during this pandemic. I’ve never been one to enjoy exercising on my own at home but give me a dance and some lovely music, and I’m up there straight away. So, during the pandemic, I set out to share my love of dancing with anyone who wanted to dance along with me, and along the way, I found an added bonus of regular companionship. We’ve chatted via our WhatsApp group and by emails. We’ve shared photos, funny video clips, favourite music, our ups and downs, and so much more.

We’ve been dancing together since March 2020, using videos on our Scottish CSCD website. We are very proud of our library of dances and we’re absolutely indebted and thankful to all the lovely people who have contributed so many of their choreographies and shared their videos. We are also hugely indebted to Jenny Collins, our amazing webmaster, who has made all this possible.

If you’re interested to join our WhatsApp group, please contact me. You can also browse the videos here: https://www.cscd.org.uk/Videos_intro.htm

A poem – I am now looking through my book of favourite poems, but for the moment, I have a couple of uplifting quotes to share with you, sent to me by Lucy, my 22 year old scientist grand-daughter, "Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." - *Marie Curie*. "Above all don't fear difficult moments. The best comes from them" - *Rita Levi-Montalcini winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Medicine*. Both of these seem very poignant in these current times.

A letter – looking through my book of poems just now, I found a letter inside from my lovely Mum, who died 20 years ago. Just an ordinary everyday letter, as she would often write to me. This one was about her Sunday, but reading it just now, the years just dropped away and it felt as fresh and new as if she had

written it yesterday. My first thought was to immediately write a reply, as I always used to do, but then I remembered aargh, sadly not. So, if you have someone special who has written to you today, then seize the moment, and write a reply straight away whilst you have the chance.

A photo - I am sharing with you a photo of a painting I received as a Christmas present from my sister (Hazel Rutter).



Hazel's painting is of the last rose still flowering in her garden in October last year.

The rose looks so full of petals and the green leaves are looking as fresh as if it had been picked in summer.

A memory – where do I begin? Cue for a song there I think. So many memories to choose from but as this is an article for Grapevine, then one about circle dancing would be best. My abiding memory is of my very first time of dancing in a circle in 2001. It was with Lilly Sell at her weekly gathering in Benson, Oxfordshire. Just an ordinary evening class for Lilly and her dancers but for me the moment was magical and life-changing. From that very first class I just knew this dancing was what I wanted to do, where I wanted to be, where I belonged. At the end of the class, the lights were turned out and we gathered into a hug-hold around the centrepiece, a first time for me to ever do such a thing. I was transported into the joy of this deep sharing with others; we looked into the glow of the candle light, we said a closing mantra together, we were 'as one'.

My hopes and fears for the network - well, I am an eternal optimist, so I have no fears, only hopes. My hope, and this probably applies to most of you reading this, is that we shall see a return to Circle Dancing as we remember it, holding hands in a circle and feeling a closeness with those sharing the music and the same steps. I firmly believe it will happen. It might take longer than we ever imagined back in March 2020, it might even take another year according to some scientists. But, as the saying goes, 'while there's life, there is hope', - *Stephen Hawking*, and I for one, feel that hope is the way forward for us all.

And just to complete my 'crazy idea', here's **a poem**.

Until we meet again by Andy Walker

Keep well and strong each day my friend

Until we meet again

You're in my prayers each day my friend

Until we meet again

For health and peace each day my friend

Until we meet again