

Looking back at a year full of dance



First year Scottish country dancer Mandy Clark with second - year dancer and newly found friend Liz Hands at the Johnsonville Scottish Country Club's Christmas lunch. PHOTO: Lorelee Hyde

It's been a year since a friend invited Mandy Clark along to try something new, and – looking back now – she doesn't regret taking on the challenge.

The local women joined the beginners' classes at Johnsonville Scottish Country Dance Club last January.

Mandy remembers thinking she "would go, have a look, but didn't expect to be there the next week".

"When I walked in, I saw all these people, smiling and being very welcoming. I thought this is a good start," Mandy says.

"I don't really remember much of those first few lessons, but somewhere along the way I got hooked, and found the whole Scottish country dance experience addictive."

Mandy had done ballet and tap as a child, some 40 - odd years ago

and had always wanted to get back to some form of dancing.

She found her past experience helped with the footwork, and – unexpectedly – the internet helped with finding out more about how the dances were done.

She learnt a lot from watching YouTube videos of Scottish country dancers from all over the world.

Mandy is an enthusiast. She had a lot of fun going along to extra classes that were offered for beginners.

"About three quarters of the way through the year the dancing started to fall into place for me," Mandy says.

With her increased confidence, she enjoyed dancing at other local clubs, going to Saturday night dances, and the excitement of live music at club Tartan nights.

"On reflection, I have had an

amazing year. I have met some lovely people and been lucky enough to have had a lot of encouragement and support.

"There is something very special about Scottish country dancing," Mandy explains.

"I realise I have developed an enthusiasm which I didn't expect. It is extremely beneficial, and I encourage anyone I come across to give it a go."

Mandy is looking forward to the start of the 2018 dancing year. She can't wait to bring some friends along to beginners' classes in February to try Scottish country dancing for themselves.

■ Find out more about Johnsonville Scottish Country Dance Club beginners' classes at johnsonvillescd.org.nz or contact Elaine 027 2725637, or Kristin and Rod 4784948.