

Madison Scottish Country Dancers Branch of the RSCDS (USA)

Number of years established as a branch: 19

Annual Report (July 2021 - June 2022)

Respectfully submitted by Ian Stuart Gaylor, Secretary

Our branch resumed many, but not all, of its pre-Covid dance activities this year. Our socially-distanced events included Zoom gatherings and a firepit social to celebrate the visit of a past member.

We returned to in-person Sunday dance classes during October of 2021, when Dane County relaxed some of its Covid regulations and our regular hall, the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center, opened up again. The group requires all participants to wear masks and show proof of vaccination and boosters. We dropped our mid-dance break and kept socializing to a minimum and hand sanitizing to a maximum.

Our official membership dropped from 28 to 24. However, we are expecting to add at least 4 or 5 new members in the coming year! Sunday evening attendance averaged about 15 dancers. A few of our members have thus far opted not to return to in-person dancing due to the ongoing pandemic.

In January we hosted a Burns Night dance party, our first since December of 2019. We had live music by our resident fiddler, Dave Mullen, and a decent turnout.

In March, we opted to cancel our annual ball for the third year due to Covid uncertainty. A survey of probable attendees indicated that there wasn't enough interest to justify the work and expense of hosting a ball.

In lieu of the ball, we hosted an informal dance party in March. We danced to a trio of live music and had a potluck party afterwards at a private home. Many members were very excited to attend the potluck and to see the faces of newcomers for the first time. Some of us had forgotten how nice it can be to socialize and sup with a congenial group of people.

Continuing on the bright side, three of our teachers taught a beginner class through the Madison School and Community Recreation Department in early 2022. The adult students were unusually quick and enthusiastic learners! After classes ended in March, four of the students have become regular attendees of our Sunday evening dance sessions. A fifth student happens to be a brilliant piper and has played and danced when we have special events.

In May several dancers performed at the Olin Park Pavilion as part of a dance series sponsored by the City of Madison. Members performed four dances and also did several audience participation dances, accompanied by live fiddle and bagpipes.

In June the Madison Branch, along with the Chicago and Milwaukee Branches, co-hosted the Midwest Scottish Weekend, a residential dance workshop in Ripon, Wisconsin. It was the first Weekend since 2019. The staff was very accommodating and the facilities were acceptable. The ballroom was especially elegant! We anticipate using

Ripon College for future Weekends. Although we were concerned that dancers might not be ready to return during Covid, we had a respectable 45 people at the event, including a large number of first-time attendees. The teachers were Sharon Barker from Calgary and Alan Twigg from California. The musicians were fiddler, Mara Shea, and accordion player, Tom Pixton.

As the year ends, we are encouraged that the future will bring some new blood to our Board and that teacher certification exams are available once more. We wish our candidates well!



Our first dance party since 2019—Burns Night, January 30, 2022