

RSCDS John Muir Branch (Wisconsin, USA)

Number of years established as a branch: 16

Annual Report (June 2018 - June 2019)

Respectfully submitted by Ian Stuart Gaylor, Secretary

The John Muir Branch of the RSCDS has had yet another event-filled year. We often had about 20 enthusiastic dancers showing up for our weekly Sunday dance sessions. We gained three new members and lost three so our official membership remains 33. Milwaukee/Madison dual members Terry, Rebecca, and John helped out our regular Madison teachers by teaching classes on many occasions this past year.

We danced and socialized our way through the year. In July, the Annual General Meeting was held. Three new members joined the board this year. Barb is now the treasurer, Emily is in charge of membership and Ian is the new secretary. The rest of the board stayed the same. Also in July we relaxed with a pool party and potluck and watched *Local Hero*. The group performed in four Madison area demos. In September, we performed at a free dance series sponsored by the Friends of Olin Park. We also danced at the Willy Street Fair in September. September included technique lessons taught by our teacher at the beginning of Sunday evening dances. In October, we performed at the Capital City Highland Dance Competition at Oakwood. December brought our annual winter dance party at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center with music provided by the talented Mullen and Deck families, followed by a potluck dinner at a member's home. January brought forth our first annual Open House. It was a successful and fun event! We had about 35 dancers. Two new dancers ended up signing up for classes with the Madison School and Community Recreation Department (MSCR). In the spring, we danced at the Beth Israel Center. Our teachers continue to work hard in planning our Sunday evening dances. The teachers also taught fall and spring Scottish Country Dance classes through MSCR. Several participants from those classes joined us for our annual formal ball. A children's class, now called *Family Class*, was also taught in the fall prior to regular Sunday evening dances. For the second year in a row, some of our brave teachers spent time with scores of Girl Scouts introducing them to Scottish country dancing.

Our big event every year is our ball. This year's theme was Princes Street Gardens. The evening before the ball we hosted a piano and fiddle concert by our musicians Liz Donaldson and Elke Baker. This year, some Highland dance students enlivened the concert by performing dances during some of the music pieces. A workshop focusing on dance form and technique was taught by Lara Friedman-Shedlov on Saturday morning. Dave Mullen, our resident fiddler, joined Liz and Elke for a lively set of tunes at the ball, which was preceded by a tasty served dinner and Grand March, complete with dancer/bagpiper Al Smith. After an evening of delightful dancing, an after-ball party was held at a member's home, as was a Sunday morning brunch. Dancers from several states attended the ball with a total of about 65.

Due to a change in our reporting dates, there are two Midwest Scottish Weekends to review this year. In June of 2019 we co-sponsored the 10th annual Midwest Scottish Weekend at Wayland Academy in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. There was an unusually large turnout of attendees this year. A total of 62 dancers joined us for a fun-filled weekend of dance, instruction, great food, ceilidh acts, and camaraderie. Beautiful music for the dances and instruction was provided by Ralph Gordon, Dave Weisler and Susan Worland. Dance instruction was provided by Tine MacKay and our own Kate Deck. The website for the event was updated and renovated this year by Nancy McClements. In June of 2018, Midwest Scottish Dance Workshop also took place at the Wayland Academy. There were a total of 55 attendees. The dance workshops were taught by Tim Wilson of San Francisco and Mady Newfield of Chicago. Mady included an enjoyable session of Welsh folk dance. The musicians were Californians Andy Imbrie and Deby Benton Grosjean (of the *Reel of Seven*).

The end of the year was spent in securing a new temporary location for our Sunday night class, the James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation on E. Johnson St. We will meet there through October 13th, 2019, when the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center will be (hopefully) finished with its remodeling.