

RSCDS John Muir Branch (Wisconsin, USA)
Number of years established as a branch: 14
Annual Report (June 2016 - May 2017)
Respectfully submitted by M. J. Wiseman, Secretary

The John Muir Branch of the RSCDS has had an event-filled year. Beginning with the Annual General Meeting in July where continuing Board members were elected, we danced and socialized our way on through the past months. We are a co-sponsor of the Midwest Scottish Weekend Dance Workshop held at Beloit College in June which always draws a number of our members. In the midst of a hot August, we relaxed with pool party and potluck. The group performed in two demonstrations: Mad Gael Fest, and at the Scottish Fest in Montello, Wisconsin. In early December we held a dance party with live musicians, some of them teenagers, followed by a potluck dinner. January included a Burns Night Social.

Our teachers are working hard to plan our evening dances. Each night ends with the opportunity to request dances. Two of our teachers held a class on our dance night for children and they joined us for the first set at the dance party and the ball. One of our teachers held a class for children at an elementary school in the spring. In February, several of our members and teachers spent a day with over 200 Girl Scouts in 6 groups introducing them to Scottish country dancing. We also held two classes for adults through our school and community recreation program. Several participants are now dancing with us on our regular dance night.

Our big event every year is our ball. This year's theme was *Ruby Ball*, to pay tribute to our 40 years of Scottish dancing. The evening before the ball we gathered for a taco party and a time to share memories and song. We were honored to have Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas provide fiddle and cello ball music, and dancers came from near and far to celebrate with us and enjoy this rare opportunity to dance to such outstanding musicians. The ball was preceded by a tasty served dinner and Grand March. After an evening of delightful dancing an after-ball party was held at the home of Chuck Snowdon and Ann Lindsey. Sunday morning Mike Briggs hosted a brunch at Capitol Lakes Retirement Center.

We are hoping that a chapter on our branch in the new book *A Resident's Guide to Madison, Wisconsin* will attract new dancers who might miss our more traditional marketing venues. A modern website redesign, long overdue, has finally placed us firmly in the 21st century!