

RSCDS Branch: Madison Scottish Country Dancers (Wisconsin, USA)

Number of years established as a branch: 22

Annual Report (July 2024 - June 2025)

Respectfully submitted by Corinna Gries, Secretary

Madison Scottish Country Dancers (MSCD) has had yet another event-filled year. We often had about 20 or more enthusiastic dancers showing up for our weekly Sunday dance sessions.

Membership: Our official membership is currently at 37 active members and many more potential members on our mailing list

MSCR Classes: The Beginner Scottish Country Dance classes taught through the Madison School and Community Recreation program continue to be a great success and are generally fully booked. A 'try it' evening precedes the official class and was well attended. A graduation party with live music followed the Fall class during regular Sunday evening dancing, and the Winter class attended our annual ball for free. Several participants from the Fall and Winter sessions have joined up and have been regularly dancing at our Sunday evening classes. Thanks to Nancy McClements and Janice Lacock for providing enthusiastic and expert instruction and Bethany Wolkoff and Isabella Palange for extra support to beginning dancers.

Teachers: Between the Madison and Milwaukee branches we are very lucky to have several amazing teachers, who are regularly traveling to provide excellent instruction to both groups, taking on new and challenging dances and preparing us well for upcoming events. Two dancers from Madison, Bethany Wolkoff and Isabella Palange, have started the long road to becoming a certified dance teacher by passing the written exam this spring. We cheer them on and thank the experienced teachers who have taken them under their wings. Our teachers have added special beginner friendly classes some Sundays at 6 pm before the regular dances at the Wil-Mar. Two demonstrations were performed at the Goodman Center and the Beth Israel Center.

Dance Parties and Other Events: The annual MSCD picnic was a rousing success at Ann Lindsay's home in August with ceilidh performances and fun to be had by everyone. Our annual Winter Dance Party at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center was held on January 4th. We had live music provided by Lochanside and a potluck dinner afterwards. During the summer months we hosted four Socials on Sunday evenings. Live music was provided by Dave Mullen and dancing was followed by potluck desserts, ice cream, and other activities. The visit of a long time dancer from Arizona, via Iowa, inspired a special advanced dance session at the Gates of Heaven with a great turnout and fun but challenging dances.

St. Andrew's Society of Madison: Their Burns dinner in January has become an annual event and dancers from MSCD performed and led several audience participation dances. The Society also held two well-attended Ceilidh dances. The latter, The Tartan Day Ceilidh, featured the band Lochanside at a local watering hole in April. Lochanside includes our musicians Dave Mullen and Andy Seevers.

Annual Ball: Our big event every year is our ball weekend in March in the beautiful Great Hall in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Memorial Union. This year the 45th annual ball's theme was 'The Sapphire Ball'. The evening before the ball we hosted a musicians' "Play Together" workshop, led by Susie Petrov on piano and a concert by the duo 'A Parcel of Rogues,' Susie Petrov and Calum Pasqua joined by fiddler KeyReel Raskolenko. A low-impact dance workshop led by Susie Petrov started off Saturday's events. Dave Mullen, our resident fiddler, joined the trio for a lively set of tunes at the ball, which was preceded by toasts, dinner and a grand march for which Andy Seevers provided the piping. After an evening of delightful dancing, a party was held at a member's home, as was a Sunday morning brunch. A total of 83 attendees from several states attended the ball, including several new dancers from the MSCR class. Another highlight of the ball was a very successful silent auction, which contributed greatly to our scholarship fund.

Midwest Scottish Weekend: In June of 2025, the Chicago, Madison, and Milwaukee Scottish Country Dance Groups hosted the 14th annual Midwest Scottish Weekend at the Wayland Academy in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. About 60 dancers joined us for a fun-filled weekend of dance, instruction, great food, ceilidh acts, and camaraderie. Beautiful music for the dances and classes was provided by Andy Imbrie and Caroline McCaskey joined by Dave Mullen. Dance instruction was provided by Tracey Applebee and Jeanne Moody, while additional classes for newer dancers were led by local teachers.

National and International Scottish Dance Workshops: Members of the MSCD are increasingly traveling to other national and international Scottish dance workshops. A sizable contingent from Madison attended the Teachers' Association (Canada) summer school in St. Catharine. Some members traveled out of state for balls (Chicago, the Twin Cities, and Ames, Iowa) and workshops to learn from new teachers and expand their repertoire of dances and friends.

Scholarships: The MSCD provided generous scholarships for travel and registration at various events.

