

RSCDS John Muir Branch (Wisconsin, USA)
Number of years established as a branch: 12
Annual Report (June 2014 - May 2015)
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 June where some new and some 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 as well as an ice cream social and danced three times in public in the early fall: at the Dane County Farmers' Market, in a beautifully refurbished barn in a City Park and at the East Side Farmer's Market. In early December, trying to avoid the winter snow storms, we held a dance party with live music followed by a potluck dinner. January included a Burns Night Social. A teacher appreciation evening was held in May.

Our teachers are working hard to plan our evening dances, including technique practice. Each evening ends with the opportunity to request dances. Two of our teachers held a multi-week 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.

Our big event every year is our ball. This year's theme was *Outlander*. We again brought in outside musicians with the goal of continuing to attract a strong regional attendance and we succeeded in having the highest attendance of any ball in the Upper Midwest. Tim MacDonald from the Chicago area impressed us with his fiddling, and Susie Petrov, pianist and teacher, returned for the weekend after high praise for her previous contributions. On Friday evening they presented a house concert at which we also performed so people could see what we do – and hopefully be tempted to join us. Susie taught a dance workshop on Saturday morning and she offered a music workshop on Saturday afternoon, attracting a number of outside 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 and Norma Briggs opened their country home for a brunch. Just a few weeks afterwards our group was very much saddened by the unexpected death of our friend and long-time teacher, Norma Briggs. As a result of her encouragement and mentorship, we have a new and thriving pool of teachers who will stand as her legacy.

We are averaging 17 dancers each evening and have several new members. A special treat has been dancers from around the US and foreign countries who walk through the door for a night or more.