

Number of years established as a branch: 11

Annual Report (June 2013 - May 2014)

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 Dance Weekend held at Beloit College which always draws a number of our members. We danced twice in public in the early fall; once at the Dane County Farmer's Market, the other at a City Park.

In October we held a social evening including a Harvest potluck dinner and a viewing of photographs taken by several of our members who had toured Scotland with In November Natalie MacMaster was in town to play a concert and some of us gathered for dinner prior to attending! Trying to avoid the winter snow storms, we held a dance party with live music followed by a potluck dinner shortly after our Thanksgiving.

Our teachers are working hard to plan our evening dances, including technique practice. Each evening ends with the opportunity to request dances. In January a class focusing on formations was held; our teachers think we're doing much better as a result. We have gained several new adult dancers. A highlight of the year was two successful children's classes with the "graduates" attending both the Holiday Dance party and the Ball to dance the first sets with us.

Our big event every year is our Ball. This year's theme was Madton Abbey. This year Sylvia was invited to join our local musicians. Because she was here we co-sponsored a Contra Dance on Friday evening prior to the Ball. It was very well attended. Our goal is always to attract a strong regional attendance at this event and we succeeded in having the highest attendance of any Ball in the Upper Midwest. The Ball was preceded by an opportunity to have photos taken with life-size cutout figures from the TV show and during a tasty served dinner a table quiz was held to test our knowledge of Downton Abbey trivia. Some attendees came in period costumes and prizes were awarded for both the quiz and costumes. After the Grand March a delightful evening of dancing ensued. An After-Ball party was held at a member's home. Sunday morning Mike and Norma Briggs opened their country home for a Brunch.

We are averaging 16(?) 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.