

The Newport Dancers' Gazette

Newport Vintage Dance Week
Editor: Katy Bishop, the Commonwealth Vintage Dancers

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NEWPORT DANCE WEEK 2004

PACK YOUR BAGS!

The dates for
THE NEWPORT VINTAGE DANCE WEEK
are August 16th to the 22nd
(with optional accommodations for Sunday the 15th)

We are working hard to organize a magical and fun-filled week of dancing and entertainments. The dance week will once again be held on the campus of Portsmouth Abbey School, located on 500 idyllic acres at the edge of Narragansett Bay, just north of Newport and next door to The Green Animals Topiary.

This year's teaching staff will be made up of returning favorites. We are delighted to welcome back Marc Casslar, Patri Pugliese, Hannelore Unfried and Joan Walton. The focus of the classes will be the dances from the mid Nineteenth through the Early Twentieth Centuries.

We will be offering balls in some of America's most elegant and splendid ballrooms. The lovely Astor's Beechwood will host the 1890's soiree on Wednesday evening, the formal dinner and Ragtime ball will be at Glen Manor House and the mid-19th Century ball will be on Friday evening in the Rotunda Ballroom at the First Beach Carousel. Live music for all three evenings will be provided by *the New River Dance Orchestra*.

The theme for this year's turn-of-the-Century fancy dress ball will be *The Land of Sweets*, a place where Nutcracker Princes and Cracker Jack Sailors dance with Sugar Plum Fairy Princesses and Marzipan Maids in the sweetest of surroundings. *Smoke and Mirrors (and friends)* will be working their creative magic to transport us into sweet surroundings for the final ball of the 2004 Newport Vintage Dance Week. Join us for sweet adventure during an informal evening of dancing and merriment featuring recorded music from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Non-dancing events scheduled include an optional group tour of one of the Gilded Age Newport mansions, Afternoon teas, a formal dinner, a beach party (weather cooperating!), a New England lobster fest, outings, games day, informal lectures on period topics and a vintage clothing bazaar.

For more information about the Newport Vintage Dance Week, please contact:

Hannah Roberts Artuso, Conference Director
E-mail: Newport@VintageDancers.org
Web: www.VintageDancers.org
Phone: (781) 662-8344
(before 10pm eastern time, please)



MR. AND MRS. VERNON CASTLE'S

1: THE CASTLE POLKA

DESCRIBED BY MR. CASTLE

BEFORE I explain the polka it might be well to tell why I think it should be revived and modernized-not to take the place of the other dances so popular now, but to add variety to all dance programs. We have at present a leaning towards things old-fashioned. This is most noticeable in the quaintness of the fashionable woman's attire. In fact my wife is wearing at parties the dress you see in these photographs.

Possibly the most important excuse for a revival and modernization of the polka is because it is easy to learn and so enjoyable to dance. In the polka you hop rather than slide, which is exactly the opposite to the usual steps in our present-day dances. This hop, if not exaggerated, is most graceful. The counting for this dance is 1-2-3-hop, 1-2-3-hop. You do the hop after the third step-that is, if you start this way: left, right, left, hop, the hop comes on the left foot. If this is clear to you it is safe to take up the dance itself, which I will explain by imagining myself the instructor and you my partner and pupil. If you happen to be a man you must put yourself in my place and study my description in that way.

To commence we assume the usual dancing position for both to go forward. I start on my left foot and you on your right (this will be better understood from our first photograph). Now we start dancing the polka step in this position, going forward around the room.



Vernon Castle



NUMBER ONE

To Commence
We Assume the
Usual Dancing
Position for Both
to Go Forward



NUMBER THREE

When Mrs. Castle Hops on the
One Foot the Heel of the Other
Comes up a Trifle



NUMBER TWO

For the—
Second Figure
Dancing in Front
of Mrs. Castle
and Mr. Castle
the Same Steps
Facing Each
Other

NEW DANCES FOR THIS WINTER

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF EACH STEP

ESPECIALLY POSED BY MR. AND MRS. CASTLE

PHOTOS COPYRIGHT BY IRA L. HILL'S STUDIO

This is the first figure, which (while we are learning) we will do eight times.

For the second figure I swing in front of you and we continue the same steps facing each other, turning the while as in the two-step (second photograph). You must be very careful not to hop until after the third step, and also, when you do hop on the one foot the heel of the other should come up, as Mrs. Castle's foot is in the third photograph. This step we will also do eight times.

The third figure is very simple and very pretty. I release my right hand, which is around your waist, and we bow to each other as in the fourth photograph. The time for this bow is eight beats- four to make the bow and four to straighten up again. After that we commence the polka step again. I start on my left foot and you on your right foot, as before.

The fourth and last figure is not quite so simple. While we are facing each other doing the ordinary polka step we change hands-that is, I take your right in my right and your left in my left, your right hand being behind your back. Now to make the change I do two ordinary walking steps, and you turn a little so that you (keeping on with the polka step) are at my side instead of facing me. After my two walking steps we go into the polka again, and in the position seen in the fifth photograph. This is all there is to the polka, and, to get back again to the first figure, all I do is to take two more walking steps and take the original hand position.



NUMBER SIX

*A Pose by My Wife
Which Illustrates a
Position Taken by
the Lady Before
Beginning the Polka
or at its Ends*



NUMBER FOUR

*It is impossible here to
see my wife's feet, but she
is stepping back on her
right, with her left pointed
in front of her.*



NUMBER FIVE

*After My Two Walking Steps-
We Go Right into the Polka Again*

1890's Costume Hints for the Sleigh Belles Ball

by Patri and Barbara Pugliese and Katy Bishop

Ladies' Evening Dress for the 1890's

Ladies' evening dress of this era consists of a fitted bodice with scooped or square cut neckline, usually with extravagantly large puffed sleeves, and a full length gored or A line skirt. Gowns were made up in a wide range of fabrics from heavy brocade and velvet to lightweight silk chiffon. A skirt with a train, although elegant, is not very practical for dancing. The gown can be ornamented with elaborate lace, contrasting trim, colored ribbon bows or fancy beadwork.

Full length white gloves would complete the outfit splendidly. Shoes in a color to compliment the gown, with a fairly low heel of 1-2 inches (such as Capezio character shoes), are comfortable for late Victorian dancing. Hair should be worn up, in a bun fairly high on the head and was usually dressed with small ornaments and feathers. Earrings should be dangles, and short bead necklaces are appropriate. A large fan also makes a useful fashion accessory.



Resale, thrift or vintage clothing shops are a good source for a suitable outfit. *Past Patterns* ball gown #206, with the addition of full puffed sleeves and skirt patterns numbers #208 and #1097 are appropriate for 1890's evening gowns. *Patterns of*

Fashion, by Janet Arnold also has accurate ball gown patterns. Fitted day gown bodices such as *Past Patterns* #207 and #903 can be easily altered by cutting it with a lower neckline and shorter puffed sleeves. *Laughing Moon* bodice and skirt patterns #103 and 101 are also quite good and easy for the beginner seamstress.



Men's Evening Wear of the 1890's

Gentlemen's evening dress of this era is fairly similar to modern formal wear: black tail coat (the "recently" invented tuxedo jacket is also an acceptable, though less formal, alternative); white formal shirts with stand up or wing tip collar; vest (ideally with lapels and scooped front- cummerbunds are not period); bow tie which can be either white or black. White gloves are *de rigueur* for ballroom wear. Flexible soled shoes such as Capezio black jazz oxfords are suitable for dancing.



Folkwear Vest pattern number #222 view B (also contains a bow tie pattern) is suitable for this period.



1860's Costume Hints for the Returning Heroes Ball

by Patri and Barbara Pugliese and Katy Bishop



Ladies' Evening Dress of the 1860's

Ladies' evening gowns of this era typically consisted of a full gathered or pleated skirt, worn over a wired hoop (110-125" in circumference at the hem), a fitted bodice with rounded off-the-shoulder neckline and short puffed sleeves. The bodice is usually fastened at the center back by either hooks and eyes or lacing. Fabrics used were most often silks in taffeta, moire or brocades, in solids, stripes, small prints or plaids. For summer wear lightweight silk organza and cotton muslins were also used. Colors would be lighter for young ladies, darker for older women. Bright red should be avoided, as would black (in America) and very dark colors. The gown can be decorated with contrasting trim and black or white lace. Decorative elements (ruffles, bows, geometric designs, etc.) on the bodice and skirt usually matched, with the skirt decoration reflected on a smaller scale on the berthe of the bodice.



Shoes should be fairly flat such as ballet flats or "character ballets," in white or a color to compliment the gown. Hair should be worn parted in the center and pulled away from the face, rolled on the sides and pulled into a bun fairly low on the neck. Evening head dresses can be circlets, wreaths, or decorative combs with ribbons, flowers and feathers. Earrings should be dangles, and short bead necklaces are appropriate, as well as gold bracelets; a matched pair of bracelets is especially fashionable. Wrist length white gloves and a small fan also makes a good evening accessory.

An old prom dress or bridesmaid dress, if the skirt is suitably long and full (100+ inches at the hem) can be easily altered to approximate the style of an 1860's ball dress with the addition of suitable sleeves and trims.

If you wish to make a more accurate gown, Past Patterns has several patterns which are quite good including: ball bodice #704, skirts #700 and #801, chemises #707 and drawers #706. A corset is indispensable for achieving a smooth fit for your bodice; Past Patterns has several options including #703, #708 and #213.

Gentlemen's Evening Dress of the 1860's

Gentlemen's evening wear of this era consisted of a black tail coat, white or black waistcoat, usually with lapels, without points at the waist (cummerbunds are not appropriate). The trousers matched the coat, without satin ribbon at the side seams and with no crease down the front and back. The outfit is completed with a stock or cravat in white or black, and white gloves. Flexible soled shoes such as Capezio black jazz oxfords are comfortable for dancing.



A modern tail coat is a good approximation of the period dress coat, and the Folkwear vest pattern #222, view B, produces an excellent vest for this period. See the resources list on our website for information on the CVD stock (necktie) pattern and a list of purveyors of vintage patterns and sewing necessities.

BOSTON AREA DANCE EVENTS CALENDAR
WINTER THROUGH SUMMER 2004



Sleigh Belles Ball

Nahant, MA, Saturday February 21

The ball will run from 8 to 11pm at the Nahant Town Hall. Live music will be supplied by *Spare Parts*. Brief instruction in waltz and polka will be provided during the twenty minutes prior to the start of the ball. Admission: \$15 per person in advance (\$10 for students), \$20 at the door. To register send a check payable to "CVD" to: CVD c/o Katy Bishop, P. O. Box 9, Nahant, MA 01908. For more information call Katy at 781-593-3038 or contact <info@vintagedancers.org>.

Returning Heroes Ball

Winchester, MA, Saturday March 6

The Civil War has ended and it is time for those who fought so bravely on both sides to engage in more social and peaceful pursuits. Join us for an evening of contra-dances, quadrilles, waltzes and polkas taught and directed by Dr. Patri J. Pugliese to the live music of *Spare Parts*. Period attire of the 1860s is *REQUIRED*. Admission by reservation only: \$15 per person, \$10 for students.. For more details, address inquiries to: <Patri@VintageDancers.org> or Barbara & Patri Pugliese, 39 Capen St. Medford, MA 02155, (781) 396-2870.

Vintage Tea Dance

Second Sunday, March 14

Sponsored by Eclectic Enterprises, West Newton, MA

Eclectic Enterprises presents the Second Sunday Vintage Tea Dance, with recorded music and a mix of teaching and dancing. In March Patri J. Pugliese and Susan de Guardiola will be teaching dances from 1890-1910. Dances will be held at the Parish Hall, First Unitarian Society of Newton, 1326 Washington St., West Newton. For more information contact Michael Bergman at: (617) 964-7684, <Michael@VintageDancers.org>

Nahant Victorian Day Ball and Tea

Sponsored by

*Vintage Victorian, CVD and the Nahant Historical Society
July 10 and 11, Nahant Town Hall, Nahant, MA*

Live music will be provided by Spare Parts, prompting by Patri J. Pugliese. Formal attire is requested, period attire of the 1860's is encouraged. Dance workshop will be held Saturday afternoon. Join us at home on Sunday afternoon for a formal Victorian Tea and croquet game. For further information visit www.VintageVictorian.com for full details, or contact Katy Bishop at 781-593-3038 or <vintage@shore.net>.

PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED

We are always searching for interesting photographs of the various events at Newport and other CVD events for inclusion in publicity materials and for placement on our web-pages. If you have any photos that you think would be appropriate, please send them to the address below, attn: CVD photos (and let us know if you wish to have them returned).

NEWPORT VINTAGE COSTUME SEMINARS

We are working on the costume seminar(s) topics and schedule for next year; we may even offer an expanded schedule of costume lectures and seminars. If anyone has suggestions of topics in either ladies or gentlemen's dress (or related topics) they would like to see covered please let us know.

CVD CELEBRATES ITS 20TH

In October CVD celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a gala dinner and Ragtime ball at the elegant Endicott House estate in Dedham, MA. Rather than celebrate with a private party, CVD decided to share the anniversary gala with the people who have made our events so special for the last two decades. Friends joined us from near and far; many were those we can count on to come to events year after year; and also in attendance were many old friends that hadn't been seen for quite some time. The dinner was a gastronomic delight, with great conversation and a celebratory toast given by Mr. Casslar. The evening continued with lively music by *The New River Dance Orchestra* in the elegant ballrooms of the mansion. After the ball many guests stayed at the estate, visiting late into the night. The weekend was capped off with a gourmet breakfast buffet. Thanks to everyone who attended the event and sent well wishes, here's to another 20 years of dancing in the past!

For Further information on the Newport Vintage Dance Week, CVD, vintage dance or to make suggestions for the Gazette please contact The Commonwealth Vintage Dancers at: (781) 662-8344 or e-mail Info@VintageDancers.org visit us on the web at: www.VintageDancers.org or write: CVD, c/o Katy Bishop P. O. Box 9, Nahant, MA 01908