

The Newport Dancers' Gazette

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

Volume XII, Number 2
Wednesday, 17 August 2005

SWAP AND SELL Wednesday, Auditorium

The Vintage Swap and Sell will be held Wednesday afternoon in the Auditorium. Everyone is welcome to bring items to sell or trade. You might find what you have always wanted to complete that vintage outfit, or something you never knew you needed, to add to the pile of stuff in your room. Really, you *need* it. Please See Patri Pugliese or Katy Bishop if you need table space.

... & AFTERNOON TEA

Tea will be served in the Winter Garden during the Swap and Sell. Feel free to wear casual modern or period dress.

WEDNESDAY DINNER

Dinner will be served ½ hour early on Wednesday evening to allow more time to prepare for and travel to the Ball at The *Astors' Beechwood*.



THE PLEASURES OF DANCING IN A CROWDED ROOM OFTEN CREATE A GREAT DEAL OF WEAR AND TEAR.

Harper's Bazar, 16 March 1872

1890'S BALL AT THE ASTOR'S BEECHWOOD Wednesday, 580 Bellevue Avenue, Newport

DIRECTIONS FROM PORTSMOUTH ABBEY :

Turn left onto Cory's Lane, drive to the intersection with route 114, turn right onto 114 and almost immediately, at the first light, turn left onto Hedley Street (there is a sign to Portsmouth Business Park). A little over ½ mi. down Hedley Street there is a stop sign, with a second stop sign almost immediately beyond it. Go straight at the first stop sign and turn right at the second onto route 138 south. Go approximately 4½ miles on Route 138; 138 intersects with 138A (Aquidneck Avenue) at a Dunkin Donuts, turn left onto 138A. Follow Aquidneck Avenue for about 2 miles, it eventually intersects with Memorial Blvd. Turn left onto Memorial Blvd., which bears right and past Newport's First Beach (on left). Follow Memorial Blvd. up the hill to the first major intersection with traffic lights (which is Bellevue Avenue). After turning left onto Bellevue Avenue, go approximately 1½ miles; *Beechwood* is on the left just after *Rosecliff* and just before *Marble House* (watch carefully as the sign can be difficult to spot). If you get to *Marble House*, turn around.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BEECHWOOD AND THE ASTORS

Caroline Schermerhorn married William Backhouse Astor in 1853. She brought long lines of established social background to the Astor fortune and became the undisputed Queen of American Society. Caroline Astor insisted upon being called "The Mrs. Astor" by family and friends. With the help of a southern gentleman, Mr. Ward McAllister, she devised the famous "400," a list of 213 families and individuals whose lineage could be traced back at least three generations.

Beechwood was built in 1851 for a southern cotton merchant named Daniel Parrish; the architects were Andrew Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux. William Backhouse Astor, Jr., purchased the mansion in 1881, and it became the social center for New York Society for twenty-five years of the Gilded Age. William B., as his wife called him, was the grandson of John Jacob Astor, the German immigrant who made himself the richest man in America by investing in fur trading and real estate. Even in 1999, he was listed as the fourth-wealthiest American ever (Microsoft's Bill Gates was fifth).

The Astors hired architect Richard Morris Hunt to create an atmosphere at *Beechwood* that would be worthy of America's finest citizens. The family invested two million dollars into the renovations. Caroline Astor presided over countless social activities during the eight weeks of each year she visited *Beechwood*. The highlight of every summer season was Mrs. Astor's Summer Ball. Mrs. Astor retired from social life in 1906. She lived quietly until her death in 1908.

After Mrs. Astor's death her son John Jacob Astor, IV, inherited *Beechwood*. In 1911 he remarried a much younger woman named Madeleine Talmadge Force; their ceremony was held in the ballroom of *Beechwood*. After the service the couple headed to Europe to escape the gossip of their union. Unfortunately, they were returning to New York on the RMS Titanic. Madeleine, who was five months pregnant, survived. Her husband, Titanic's most wealthy passenger, did not.

-text courtesy of
The Astor's Beechwood Mansion

Fashionable Dances of the Day

Although in every city and town throughout the country there may be dancing steps in a manner of dancing peculiar to the place, still the fashionable dances of today are in general principles much the same everywhere, and those which are the most popular here in New York, for instance, are universally recognized as the dances correct for any entertainment which may be given elsewhere, so we will concern ourselves with the ones now in vogue in our metropolis.

As far as possible, square dances are being eliminated from the order of the dancing functions of to-day, but as they will always be pleasing to the people who, although they may feel of dancing spirit inclined, are not as young as they once were, and so not quite equal to the giddy measures of the waltz or two-step, they usually have their place in the programme of any entertainment where such guests may be present, and even if the younger dancers demur at the occasional lancers or quadrilles set down the list of evening's dances, they nevertheless are usually quite ready to take part in them. Indeed, at the lively free and easy festivities given where a house party assembles in the country, or at dances given in a private house in town, where all present know each other intimately, the same square dances are often an opportunity for the young people to indulge in a frolic and give vent to their surplus of animal spirits, for in the various figures where the low courtesies, gay



promenadings, changing partners, and "all hands round" are made the occasion of much fun, many a spirited quarter of an hour may be enjoyed. Another good old dance is the Virginia reel, always a favorite as a wind-up to any dancing party of an informal kind, and in this old and young may also take an equally active part, and enter with the same glee and enthusiasm into the spirit of the sport.

But although these square dances may be tolerated, round dances at present have the undisputed supremacy, and of these the most popular are the ever-enticing waltz, which seems to hold its own among all dances, the polka, and the two-step, or deux-temps.

Many are the variations on these dances, called by different names, as the Yale, York, etc., one even being called the Trilby, I have heard; but although in name their variety may be great, in character they almost always resemble the original step from which they are adapted so nearly that those dancers who are thoroughly familiar with the foundations, which are generally one of the three dances given, will be able to easily pick up the trifling changes in the steps and time of all others that are called in every place by different names. Again, dances which a few years ago were in high favor, such as dancing-in-the-barn, are now in the decline of their popularity, and, in fact, it is not unusual for a dancing entertainment to be given where the order of dances for the entire evening is made up of jolly waltzes, polkas, and two-steps, danced one after the other, with about twice as many waltzes and two-steps as polkas, and no square or any other dances.

Here in New York the waltz is danced much as in recent years, slow or fast, according to the preferences of the individual dancers, but always in rather a dignified way, and as it is ever the most graceful of modern dances, so in the long-run it is the pleasantest in motion and time. In dancing this, as in all round dances, a gentleman holds his partner's right arm out straight, his left hand holding her right hand lightly but firmly, while his right arm encircles her waist, and her left hand rests on his right arm. The polka is danced in different ways, with one, two, three, or more glides, three being the most popular, but in whichever way it must be danced in perfect time with the music, whether the movements of the dancers be slow and restful, or gay and rollicking, and degenerating occasionally into a romp. The two-step, which is now in full tide of popular favor, almost rivaling the waltz in the opinion of its devotees, is danced to march time, the fine, spirited marches of Sousa's being the music most used to accompany it. For this the time of the music and the dancers must be well marked, and the spirit of both lively, if it is to be made truly enjoyable and danced as it should be. It is a change from the waltz, easier, less fatiguing, and offering more opportunity for fun and jollity, so it is likely to maintain long its present high rank of favor.

These any ordinary dances of the present time, and in making a programme for a dancing entertainment it is safe to say that they succeeding one another, with perhaps four square dances, and a Virginia reel as a finale, will make an order of dancing agreeable to all the young people who may be present, and one in which the older people are also considered. To make such an entertainment thoroughly successful, however, the greatest care must be taken in the selection of the musicians who are to play the dance music. It is not necessary to have many of them, but those chosen must be well prepared. Their selections must be new and gay, the time well accentuated, but not too much so, and all the pieces played with the right spirit for dancing. Each selection should last about twenty minutes, and then should come a rest of about ten minutes before the next one is begun.

Harper's Bazar, 22 December 1896

2005 PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY

Last year many people submitted discs of their photos for inclusion on our website, creating a wonderful page of memories. We would like to do the same thing in 2005. If you have photos you would like to include please send them along! The page will remain private, accessible with an address given out only to 2005 attendees. Please give discs/photos to Katy or Ben Bishop or send them to the address on page 4, attn: Katy Bishop (tell us if you want them returned).

THURSDAY CLASS SCHEDULE

The Thursday Afternoon class will not take place to allow more time for person outings and a group tour. The class will take place on Saturday morning.

OUTING DAY & BREAKERS MANSION TOUR

Thursday, August 17
Marble House, Bellevue Ave, Newport

This year's optional Group Tour will be to one of the most famous Gilded age mansion, The Breakers, home of the Vanderbilts. We are pleased to offer a reduced group rate of \$11.00 per person. Directions and a brief introduction to The Breakers follow.

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HISTORY OF THE BREAKERS

The Breakers is the grandest of Newport's summer "cottages" and a symbol of the Vanderbilt family's social and financial preeminence in turn of the century America. Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877) established the family fortune in steamships and later in the New York Central Railroad, which was a pivotal development in the industrial growth of the nation during the late 19th century.

The Commodore's grandson, Cornelius Vanderbilt II, became Chairman and President of the New York Central Railroad system in 1885, and purchased a wooden house called The Breakers in Newport during that same year. In 1893, he commissioned architect Richard Morris Hunt to design a villa to replace the earlier wood-framed house which was destroyed by fire the previous year. Hunt directed an international team of craftsmen and artisans to create a 70 room Italian Renaissance- style palazzo inspired by the 16th century palaces of Genoa and Turin. Allard and Sons of Paris assisted Hunt with furnishings and fixtures, Austro-American sculptor Karl Bitter designed relief sculpture, and Boston architect Ogden Codman decorated the family quarters. The Vanderbilts had seven children. Their youngest daughter, Gladys, who married Count Laszlo Szechenyi of Hungary, inherited the house on her mother's death in 1934. An ardent supporter of The Preservation Society of Newport County, she opened The Breakers in 1948 to raise funds for the Society. In 1972, the Preservation Society purchased the house from her heirs. Today, the house is designated a National Historic Landmark.

-Text courtesy www.Newportmansions.org

AFTERNOON TEA Thursday, Winter Garden

Self service tea will be available in the Winter Garden for those remaining on campus.

KIMONOS

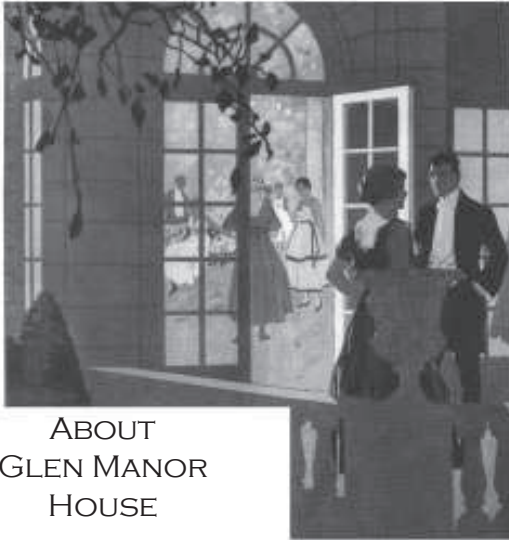
Bonnie Carpenter has brought many lovely Kimonos from Japan to be sold at the Swap & Sell Bazaar!



FORMAL DINNER AND RAGTIME BALL

Thursday, Glen Manor House
Coelho Drive, Portsmouth

“The Glen,” as it is referred to by locals, is the setting for Thursday’s formal dinner and Ragtime Ball.



ABOUT
GLEN MANOR
HOUSE

In 1920 H. A. C. Taylor, a prominent farmer who also owned homes in New York and Newport planned to build a proper home on his farm. He hired architect John Russell Pope, designer of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC. His French style design for the house was based on the Petit Trianon at Versailles, and was unique for the area. Although Mr. Taylor died before work began in 1921, his son Moses continued the work.

The Taylors moved into the house in 1923 and lived there for many years. Reginald, Moses’ son, sold it to the sisters of the Sacred Heart, who moved their Elmhurst School to the property in 1961. When the school closed in 1972, the town of Portsmouth purchased the property. Glen Manor House now provides an exquisite setting for special functions.

- excerpts from information provided
by Glen Manor House



Femina, January 1, 1914

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For Further information on the Dance Week
or vintage dance please contact:
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visit them on the web at:
www.VintageDancers.org