

# The Newport Dancers' Gazette

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

Volume XV, Number 2  
Wednesday, 13 August 2008

## VINTAGE SWAP AND SELL Wednesday Afternoon, Auditorium

The 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 Barbara Pugliese or Katy Bishop if you need table space.

## WINTER GARDEN TEA Wednesday Afternoon, Auditorium

During the Swap & Sell tea and cookies will be available in the Winter Garden

## 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*.

## 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 St. (there is a sign to Portsmouth Business Park). A little over ½ mi. down Hedley St. there is a stop sign, with a second stop sign almost immediately beyond it at a T intersection. 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 Ave.) at a Dunkin Donuts, turn left onto 138A. Follow Aquidneck Ave. 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 (Bellevue Ave.). After turning left onto Bellevue Ave., 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. As parking is limited, carpooling is encouraged.



### A SOCIAL SIN.

HE (After the Waltz): "NOW DO YOU THINK DANCING IS WICKED?"  
SHE (Sweetly): "YES; IF ONE DANCES AS BADLY AS YOU DO."

LIFE, DECEMBER 1890

## 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*



### SPORTS & PASTIMES TEA

Thursday, Manor House Gazebo

Thursday's Tea will be served in the Summer Garden, under the trees near the Manor House Gazebo. Come sit and chat with other Dance Week participants, play a game of croquet, enjoy a bathe, or visit the lovely stony beach adjacent to the field where tea is served. Casual dress, modern or vintage, bathing costumes or period sporting dress, is appropriate.





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## Etiquette Hints for the Ball Room

On entering a ball-room, all thought of self should be dismissed. The petty ambition of endeavoring to create a sensation by either dress, loud talking, or unusual behavior, is to be condemned; also the effort to monopolize a certain part of the room during the evening, or of forming exclusive circles when unanimity and good feeling should prevail, are, to say the least, exceptionable. (Hillgrove, A Complete practical guide to the art of dancing, New York: 1863, p. 24.)

Ladies should remember that men look to the effect of dress in setting off the figure and countenance of a lady, rather than to its cost. Few men form estimates of the value of ladies' dress. This is a subject for female criticism. Beauty of person and elegance of manners in woman will always command more admiration from the other sex than costliness of clothing. (Hillgrove, p. 18.)

Be very careful, when dressing for a ball, that the hair is firmly fastened, and the coiffure properly adjusted. Nothing is more annoying than to have the hair loosen or the head-dress fall off in a crowded ball room. (Florence Hartley, The Ladies' Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness. Boston: 1860, p. 167.)

Draw on your gloves (white or yellow) in the dressing-room, and do not be for one moment with them off in the dancing-rooms. At supper take them off; nothing is more preposterous than to eat in gloves. (Henry P. Willis, Etiquette, and the Usages of Society. New York: 1860, p. 22.)

In inviting a lady to dance with you, the words, "Will you honor me with your hand for a quadrille?" or "Shall I have the honor of dancing this set with you?" are more used now than "Shall I have the pleasure?" or "Will you give me the pleasure of dancing with you?" (Cecil B. Hartley, The Gentlemen's Book of Etiquette. Philadelphia: 1860, p. 93.)

A young lady should be very careful how she refuses to dance with a gentleman; and above all she must take care not to accept two gentlemen for one dance. Many duels have resulted from this thoughtlessness. (Mrs. Hale, Manners; or, Happy Homes and Good Society. Boston: 1868, p. 286.)

If your partner has a bouquet, handkerchief, or fan in her hand, do not offer to carry them for her. If she finds they embarrass her, she will request you to hold them for her, but etiquette requires you not to notice them, unless she speaks of them first. (Cecil B. Hartley, p.96.)

When an unpracticed dancer makes a mistake, we may apprise him of his error; but it would be very impolite to have the air of giving him a lesson. (Willis, p. 23.)

When the dance is over, offer your arm to your partner, and enquire whether she prefers to go immediately to her seat, or wishes to promenade. If she chooses the former, conduct her to her seat, stand near her a few moments, chatting, then bow, and give other gentlemen an opportunity of addressing her. If she prefers to promenade, walk with her until she expresses a wish to sit down. Enquire, before you leave her, whether you can be of any service, and, if the supper-room is open, invite her to go in there with you. (Cecil B. Hartley, p. 93.)

Every gentleman should escort a lady to the supper-room, and after attending to her wants or tastes, never forget to return with her to the ball or drawing rooms, for nothing can be more impolite than to leave an "unprotected female" to shift for herself amid the tumult of a crowd of modern party-guzzlers. (Anon. Bazar Book of Decorum. New York: 1870, p. 228.)

At private parties ladies and gentlemen should not dance exclusively with the same partners, if by so doing they exclude others from desirable company. We may, however, without impropriety ask a lady to join us the second time in a dance. We should treat all courteously; and, not manifesting preference for any one in particular, be ready to dance with whoever may need a partner. (Hillgrove, p. 21.)



FACT VERSUS FANCY.

*The Daily Times* last week had a leading article on Croquet. Our contemporary declared that it was one of those pastimes that brings out all the kindly feelings of human nature.

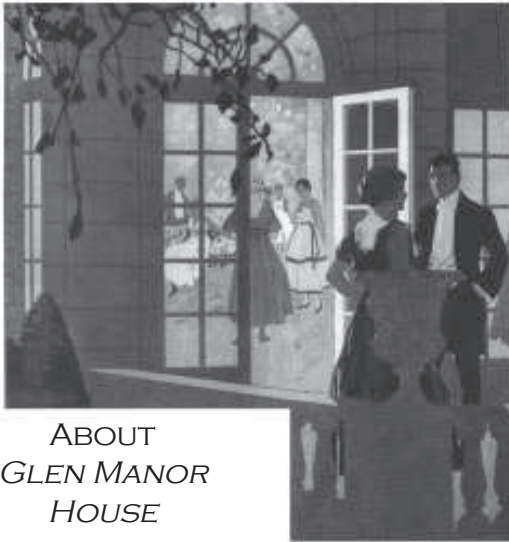
MISS GUSHINGTON (*sotto voce*)—"I've got her now, the little minx! She's been cheating all through—she purposely got on Charlie Devereaux side—she's knocked me away from every hoop, and—(aloud)—my darling Edith, I'm afraid I shall be obliged to give you a little tap. I can't help it—an I dear?"

Frank Leslie's Ladies' Magazine, September 18, 1869

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.



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

## KIMONOS

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



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Hubby: Aren't you ready yet?  
Wife (with irritation): Why do you keep asking that? Haven't I been telling you for the last half hour that I'd be ready in a minute?

For Further information on the Dance Week  
or vintage dance please contact:  
The Commonwealth Vintage Dancers at:  
c/o Katy Bishop, P. O. Box 9, Nahant, MA 01908  
(781) 662-8344  
or e-mail [Query@VintageDancers.org](mailto:Query@VintageDancers.org)

visit CVD on the web at:  
[www.VintageDancers.org](http://www.VintageDancers.org)