

The Newport Dancers' Gazette

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

Volume XV, Number 3
Friday, 15 August 2008

FORMAL TEA AT THE SUMMER GARDEN Saturday, Manor House Gazebo

The Formal Tea will take place under the grove of trees near the gazebo, on the lawn which sweeps down to Narragansett Bay. This event is your opportunity to wear your most formal afternoon outfit to enjoy tea and a game of croquet, or to rest your feet after a full week of dancing.

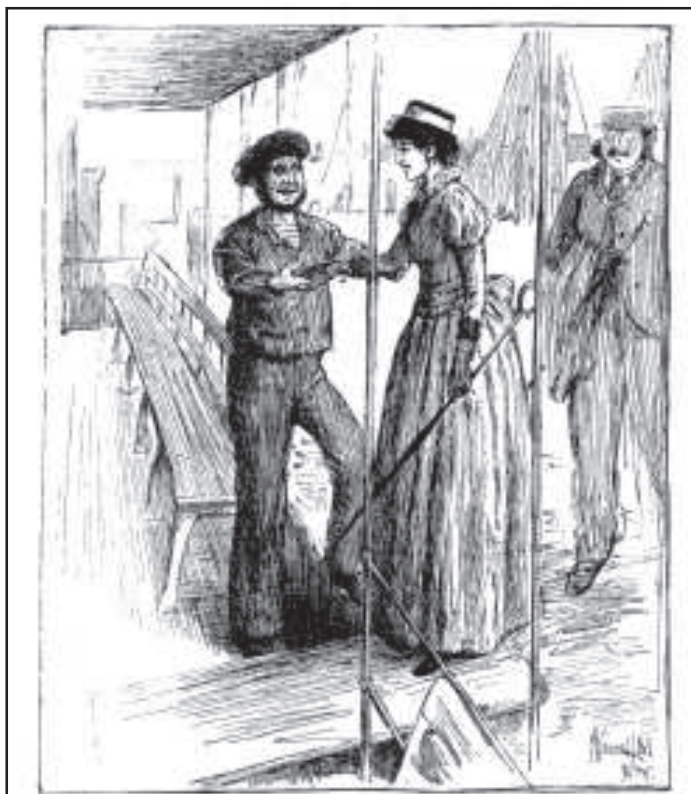


MID-19TH CENTURY BALL Friday, Rotunda Ballroom, Newport

Friday's ball will be held at the Historic *Rotunda Ballroom* adjacent to the Carousel on First Beach (Easton's Beach) in Newport. We are happy to be returning to this lovely Ballroom to enjoy the music of *The New River Dance Orchestra*. If weather permits we will enjoy refreshments on the terrace overlooking the moonlit Atlantic Ocean. Once again the Carousel will be open for rides during the intermission.

THE ROTUNDA BALLROOM AND CAROUSEL
The Ballroom at Easton's Beach, located on the Atlantic Ocean just under one mile east of Historic Bellevue Avenue. It features a 12-sided, air conditioned, symmetrical space, with windows around the entire circumference. The Ballroom and its outside wrap-around deck offer commanding ocean views and pleasant sea breezes. Located just a few feet from the Ballroom is the historic (and rare) 4 row carousel, originally built in 1952. It has a combination of horses for the more adventuresome guest and carriages for those who wish to have a more relaxed ride.

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 1/2 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 approx. 4 1/2 mi. on Rte. 138; 138 intersects with 138A (Aquidneck Ave.) at the 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 passes Newport's First Beach (on left). The carousel and ballroom will be on the left at Easton's (First) Beach. Parking is adjacent to the building.



HER HEAD WOULD KEEP HER UP.

MAIDEN FAIR. "OH IT ALWAYS MAKES MY HEAD SWIM GOING ON THE WATER!"

SAILOR FACETIOUS "NO DANGER OF DROWNING, THEN, MEM, IF YOU SHOULD FALL OVERBOARD."

Harper's Bazar, 16 August 1892

Fashionable Dances of 1881.

The “Lancers,” “Waltz,” “Galop,” “German,” and the “Quadrille” are the dances named on the ball cards of the period. The last-named has lead, however, a precarious existence. It was attempted at one of the Patriarch’s balls, but the figures were not familiar, and the admirable effort to give the chaperones and papas a chance to vary the monotony of their wall-flower existence failed. It was danced, however, with more success at one or two very elegant parties, and then laid on the shelf until the summer, when it will be a favorite dance at watering-places. The waltz—*la valse à trois temps*—holds, as it has held for forty years, the first place amongst the round dances. The beautiful music of Strauss, the truly graceful step and motion, are to be credited with its first success at Vienna, and for the hold that it has had on the world since. The various steps of the waltz family consist of the hop waltz, the glide waltz, the redowa waltz, and the waltz proper: all are beautiful. There are, however, spurious daughters of the waltz, which are occasionally danced by people desirous of notoriety at public balls, which should be avoided. Amongst these is what is called the “Boston Dip,” the “Racket,” and the “Society.” These exaggerated forms of the beautiful waltz movement are not taught by the best dancing-masters. As one of them well remarks: “Should such a style of dancing prevail, dancing must go down. Its enemies would have unanswerable arguments against it.” They are sensational, exaggerated; one might easily use a harsher term. The dance of society should be easy, natural, modest, quiet, graceful, and those dancers who occupy the excesses of the Bal Mabille or indulge in theatrical poses are in favor neither in Europe nor in America. *Punch* caricatures the “pivotal” dances in London, and the “Minstrels” broadly imitate them here.

The Galop is very fashionable, and exceedingly graceful. It has, the much-needed element of jollity without coarseness; it is “l’allegro” of the ball-room. To the inspiriting strains of “Gambrinus,” the galop has lighted up the Patriarchs’ balls, the F. C. D. C., and the superb private balls of this winter. It combines much of that Viking force and *verve* which one admires in the dancing of Swedes, Danes, and Russians. It is energetic without being romping; it is quick and lively without being rowdy. A handsome, tall, slender young couple in the galop, recall the graceful visions of the Greek frieze; there is poetry and romance in the sight. The fair Atlanta skims o’er the plain of the ball-room with a freshness which recalls the morning of the world.

The Redowa is a pretty and fashionable form of the waltz. It is composed of the step known as the *pas de basque*, and was formerly only danced to the wild Polish mazourka music, but is now adapted to the *trois temps*. There is a suggestion of the Cossack and the Danube in it, softened by the elegance of the Viennese salon. Its step is technically indicated as a *jeté*, a *glissé*, and a *coupé dessous*. The feet are, however, never raised from the floor, and it should be studied under a master.

The Glide Waltz is a slight frail, exaggeration on the Waltz proper, and should be but very slightly exaggerated. It, however, has met with much favor, and is the best and original form of the now disused “Boston Dip.”

The Polka is never danced in a ball-room by well-bred people. It is occasionally, with its heel-and-toe accompaniment, danced in the parlor after a Christmas-tree or Easter-egg party, by a family circle well known to each other, but it would be vulgar in public.

Harper’s Bazar, May 7 1881



ASK MRS. ASTORBILT

Dear Mrs. Astorbilt,

Last year I decided to skip the *Prince Imperial Quadrille* class, and planned on sitting out the dance at the Friday ball. As the sets were forming, however, I found myself near a set that was short a couple, and a nearby gentleman asked me to join the dance with him. I declined on the grounds that I did not know the dance, but the gentleman was very insistent and I finally agreed to give the dance a try. My performance was every bit as bad as I feared it would be. When the dance ended, no one said anything - no one said anything at all. What should I have done?

Confused Quadriller

Dear Confused,

Mrs. Astorbilt has a good deal of sympathy for everyone in the situation you describe. Etiquette books of the nineteenth century often include advice such as, “Never stand up to dance in a quadrille, unless you are perfectly familiar with the figures, depending upon your partner to lead you through. You will probably cause utter confusion in the set, annoy the others forming it, and make yourself appear absurd.” (Florence Hartley. *The Ladies’ Book of Etiquette* (1860), p.170.) As a general rule (a universal rule except for the “special” quadrille at the Friday ball), one really should ignore this bit of advice as it is customary at our modern balls to walk through, or even teach from scratch, all of the figure dances. The Friday quadrille is an exception as it is not taught on the spot and is not even called. For most vintage dancers this is a rare opportunity to dance a social quadrille as it would have been done in the mid-nineteenth century, that is, without calling. Most people in the set probably attended classes, practiced the figures and devoted mental energy towards memorizing the dance. It is understandable that having prepared for this dance, they would be very disappointed that their hard work was undermined.

In brief, you should not have joined this particular dance. You should also not blame yourself too harshly as the gentleman who encouraged you to join against you better judgment must share that blame, perhaps deserving the greater part of it. Etiquette books emphasize the idea that a ballroom should be a place of harmony and good feelings, and it is particularly rude for anyone to pressure another into dancing when it would lead to the discomfort of them and others.

Mrs. Astorbilt



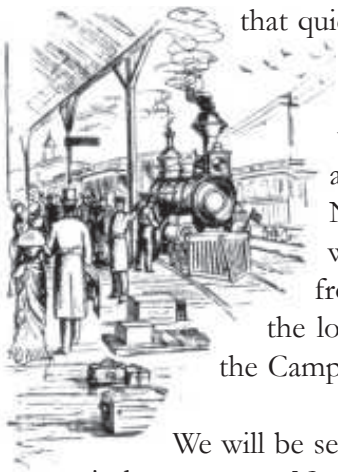
SATURDAY MORNING DANCE CLASS Saturday Morning, Gymnasium

Remember that the final third period Specialty Class will be held Saturday morning in the gymnasium.

RAIL & SAIL NEWPORT SATURDAY AFTERNOON PORTSMOUTH ABBEY "TRAIN STATION"

RAILWAY LUNCHEON

All aboard! Step back to a time when dining aboard a luxury train was a statement of elegance and privilege. Enjoy an elegant luncheon on board vintage rail cars that quietly recall the ambiance and aura of the golden age of railroading. We are picked up on campus and travel on a journey along scenic Narragansett Bay. The train will depart at noon sharp from the Campus "Station" on the lower campus by the path to the Campus beach.



We will be served an elegant lunch as we wind our way to Newport. The interior of each dining car is meticulously restored to recall a bygone era. Plush velvet draperies, fine china, linens and crystal surround us as wait-staff in black-tie attend to your every need. Please remember your luncheon tickets!

CRUISE ON THE HARBOR QUEEN BOWEN'S FERRY LANDING, NEWPORT HARBOR

Once in town, it is a short walk to Bowen's Wharf where we board the elegant 85 ft. yacht, Harbor Queen, and discover the beauty of the Narragansett Bay from the water. We will take an elegant cruise around Rhode Island's jewel: Narragansett Bay and the Newport waterfront, aboard the *Harbor Queen*. The boat offers a fine wood paneled interior, brass appointments, comfortable seating, full galley and bar. The vessel is fully air-conditioned inside and also has an outside deck. The cruise leaves from Bowen's Ferry Landing in downtown Newport. Afterward, we return to campus on a touring train.



For further information on the Dance Week or vintage dance please contact:
The Commonwealth Vintage Dancers at:
(781) 662-8344 or e-mail Query@VintageDancers.org
visit them on the web at: www.VintageDancers.org



Egyptomania Fancy Dress Ball

Saturday, Upper Gymnasium

The final evening of the week is celebrated with our traditional fancy dress ball which is held on the Portsmouth Abbey School campus. The Upper Gymnasium will be transformed into the ancient land of Egypt. Cruise the blue waters of the Nile, marvel at the wonders of King Tut's Tomb, scale the great pyramids under the desert sun. Do you have a secret desire to be a mummy or a sphinx, or does the part of sandstorm or pyramid better suit your personality? Perhaps you prefer the role of tourist, pharaoh, Napoleonic officer, or antiquities dealer. Come dance and enjoy our party under the Egyptian sun. Recorded music from all the periods covered during the week will be played at the event, there might also be a chance to perform steps and choreographies from your classes one more time.



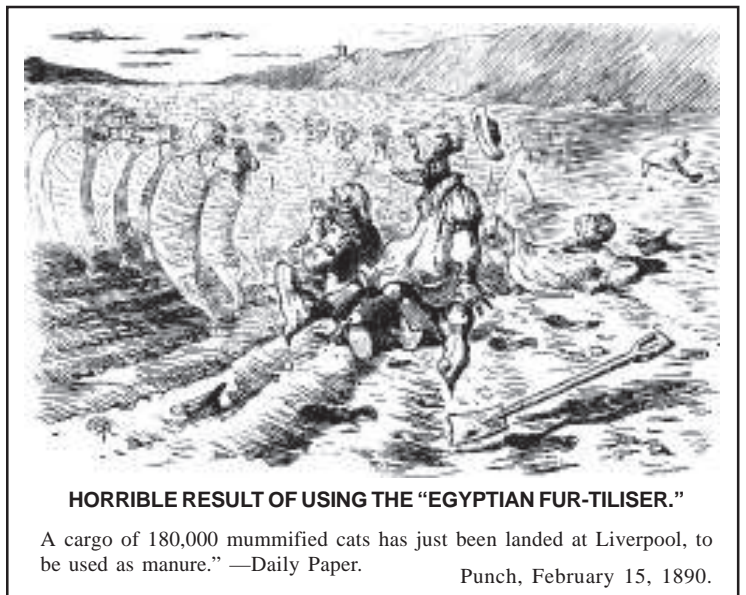
ICE CREAM AFTER PARTY want to add to last page announce- ment of ice cream party

SUNDAY KEY RETURN

We ask that you return your keys as early as possible Sunday morning. You may still be emptying your oom after you hand in your keys; you do not need to leave your room locked, but we must have your keys in hand before 11am. There will be a key return box in each dorm, please place your key in an envelope with your room number on it. Thank you!

SUNDAY CHECK-OUT

Check-out time is 11am, Sunday August 12, you must be out of your rooms by this time. Please return keys to Hannah or your house parent. Your key deposit checks will be returned to you upon return of your key(s).



HORRIBLE RESULT OF USING THE "EGYPTIAN FUR-TILISER."

A cargo of 180,000 mummified cats has just been landed at Liverpool, to be used as manure." —Daily Paper.

Punch, February 15, 1890.

NEWPORT DANCE WEEK 2009

We are all very sad that this was our last year at Portsmouth Abbey School, our home away from home for the past 11 years. Thank you for some great memories. CVD is working dilligently on plans to make a 2009 Dance Week happen. There will undoubtedly be some changes, but we will do our best to offer you the best New England has to offer, with new and exciting events and old time favorites from the past. Stay tuned to the website and your mailboxes for the latest news.