

Notes for the Warwick Christmas Regency Ball 5th December 2020

Regency Dance

The Regency period was technically 1811 to 1820, (the future George IV ruling as Regent for 'mad' King George III). However, 'Regency' is often used to refer to a broader time period, and the term Regency Dance can be used more or less flexibly to cover dances popular at any time during the 18th Century. The most popular exposure to this period of dance comes from the novels and letters of Jane Austen (1775 to 1817).



Dress at the Warwick Christmas Ball

Guests are encouraged to wear Regency-style clothes for the ball. This is not a requirement and a smart suit / evening wear will suffice, but if you would like to look a little more like a character from *Pride and Prejudice*, here are some suggestions. Feel free to decide just how authentic you want to be.

Ladies

The Empire line dress can be simulated with a ribbon tied under the bust of an evening dress (or blouse and long skirt), ideally with short puff sleeves and scooped neckline.

White or ivory gloves would normally be worn; the shorter the sleeve, the longer the glove, often fastened above the elbow with a ribbon.

Young ladies would wear simple pearls or small crosses; more mature ladies 'parures' (family sets of jewellery). Hair would normally be worn up and dressed with ribbons or a tiara. More mature ladies might wear a turban. Light shawls were often worn indoors. Soft, flexible-soled and flat shoes or pumps are essential - no stilettos or high heels, nor bare feet for dancing. Long dresses or trains should be pinned up or held to avoid tripping yourself or others.

Gentlemen

Breeches would be fastened just below the knee with a garter or ribbons, and light stockings below. But Beau Brummel invented the fashion of wearing straight dark trousers for evening wear, so plain trousers will be fine.

A white shirt with the collar turned up and a cravat made from a large square of muslin or silk, tied into a bow or knot at the front would be ideal.

Normally gentlemen would wear a tail coat in the evening, but in late Regency the frock coat (no tails) gained popularity. A simple dark jacket will do if you can't find something more in period. Waistcoats were popular, often in pale colours to contrast with the jacket.

Soft shoes or pumps were worn at assemblies, sometimes with a buckle or ribbon.

Fans

Dancing can make you feel rather warm, so you might like to bring a fan.

Gentlemen as well as ladies would often carry one.

Costume Hire

Spending money on lovely costumes is *not* a requirement for the ball, but we hope with a little inventiveness, guests will be able to dress in keeping. If you would prefer to hire a costume or an item of dress, these local hire shops can help:

Aladdin's Cave, Leamington. <http://a-cave.co.uk/portfolio/georgian-regency/> 01926 434040

Stratford Fancy Dress, Stratford. www.stratfordfancydress.co.uk 01789 298467

Preparation

Our dance director will call out instructions throughout each dance, so – unlike the Balls of the period, when people would learn the current dances by heart – you will not be expected to know the dances. However, In order to follow the instructions, you will need to understand the terminology of traditional dance – and there is quite a lot of it! If you are not an experienced dancer, these websites may help you to learn the dance moves: <https://round.soc.srcf.net/dances/elements>

<http://www.dancekaleidoscope.org.au/danceTerms.html>

We hope to hold a free dance workshop at the end of November to help novices.

On the night

If you don't have a willing dance partner to bring with you, don't be deterred, dancers will be encouraged to change partners between dances.

There will be plenty of dances to participate in on the night, so don't feel you have to dance every dance. Jugs of water will be available to enable people to stay hydrated but please don't leave glasses where they can be knocked over.

Doors will open at 7:00pm so that the dancing can start at 7:30pm - so don't be late!