

Australian Colonial Dance

Notes for the Jane Austen Ball

21st October 2017

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 Regency Dance covers 1789 to 1830, (French Revolution to the end of the Georgian era) with *country dancing* in great houses and assembly rooms becoming fashionable in the 1770s.

In the early part of the period, the ballroom was dominated by the 'country dance', the cotillion, and the scotch reel; but the 1810s saw the introduction of the quadrille and the waltz. The most popular exposure to this period of dance comes from the novels and letters of Jane Austen (1775 to 1817).



Dress at the 2017 Jane Austen 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

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 a way that indicates the Regency period.



Preparation

A lack of experience of Regency dance need not be a barrier as our dance director, Heather Clarke, will call out the instructions throughout each dance. However, if you are not familiar with dance terminology, we do advise that you attend the Early Colonial Dances on:

14th July
11th August
8th September
13th October

At **The Farmer's Hall**, 30 Main Street, Samford, QLD. 7:30pm-9:30pm @ \$10

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 feel free to pace yourself - you don't have to dance every dance.

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

