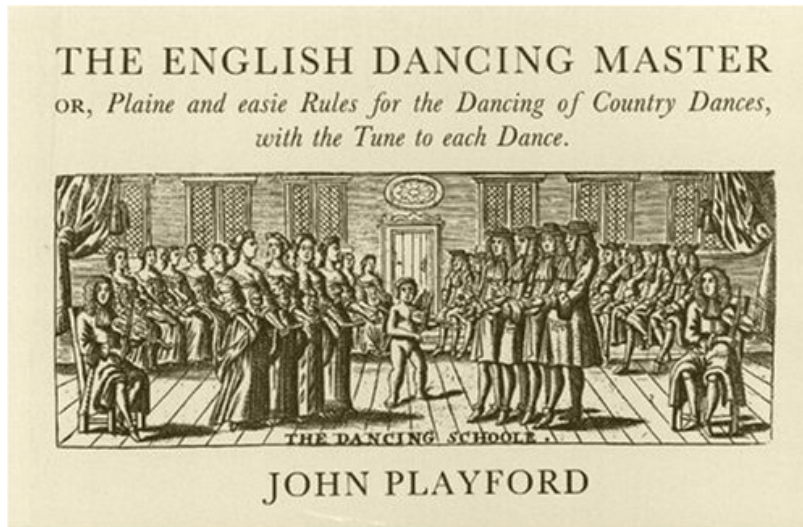


A Julian Ball Primer

compiled by

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from experiences of the same.



Alas! this primer can only aspire to the condition of the above classic.

§ The overall structure of the evening

A short interval at the beginning of the evening is dedicated to the making of acquaintances, conversation, and the asking of ladies for dances, on the part of the gentlemen. Thereafter, one or two dances are taught and danced (no prior knowledge of the dances is needed on anybody's part); a period of respite is then taken by all to gather their strength by sampling the refreshments, and revivify their spirits by engaging in conversation; whereafter one or two more dances round off the evening.

§ The dancing

The dancing engaged in at a Julian Ball is English country dancing more or less associated with the Regency Era. Many will be familiar with this kind of dancing from film adaptations of the novels of Jane Austen. The dancing is not too intimate, and is easy, pleasant, and elegant. The dances are group dances, and one need not bring a bring dance partner to the Ball (and in fact, the concept is more or less irrelevant to this kind of ball; see below).



This drawing shows an English country dance. The lady on the left is looking at her dance card.

§ The dance cards

Upon arriving, each lady shall find her own dance card near the entrance. The dance card will have the dances that shall be engaged in that evening, written inside. Gentlemen are then to ask ladies for dances; if a lady agrees to dance a particular dance with a particular gentleman, she is to write the gentleman's name in her dance card, next to the dance agreed upon with him. Dance cards help the ladies keep track of whom they have agreed to dance the different dances with.

§ Asking a lady for a dance

Gentlemen ask ladies for dances. Where possible, it is more courteous for a gentleman to make the acquaintance of a lady, exchange some pleasantries of conversation with her, before asking her for a dance. While this is true, it should also be kept in mind that Julian Balls, and English country dancing balls in general, are more social events than "romantic" ones; that is, asking a lady for a dance is not something to be nervous about, or to assign too much meaning. There is no need to come to the Ball with a dance partner; in fact, one should not dance with the same person twice (even if that person is one's spouse, or girlfriend, or boyfriend)—again, the Ball is a social occasion.

§ What to wear

Gentlemen should wear a jacket and tie, and are encouraged to wear a suit. Evening wear is welcome, but certainly not expected.

Ladies are encouraged to wear a dress, and should feel free to wear even a ball gown.



This jolly drawing shows the "five positions" of English country dancing, and also some marvelous Regency costumes. Julian Balls are not costume events, however, so one is not to arrive in historical dress.