

# *Friends of Rockwood*

## *Spring 2011*

*You are invited to attend our  
Annual membership meeting*

*On Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

*At 12 Noon*

*To be followed by a Picnic at 1:00*

*Your family and friends are invited  
to attend the picnic.*

*You bring the picnic, we bring  
the drinks and ice cream!*

*There will be games  
on the South Lawn !!!*

*In case of rain, we will "picnic" indoors  
in the West Wing*

*RSVP by May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to 302-762-2075*

*Or [info@friendsofrookwood.org](mailto:info@friendsofrookwood.org)*

*Parking in the lower parking area, please!*

## **How to Host a Victorian Picnic**

*In the dog days of summer, one often desires a happy excursion to whittle away the hours with family and friends. What better way to do so than to arrange a Victorian summer picnic? Eating al fresco has been popular throughout history. Picnics became most popular during the Queen Victoria's reign in England. Victorians delighted in picnicking and made it quite fashionable. Picnics were held at families' homes or other scenic locations.*

*Victorian etiquette prescribed that careful consideration should be taken in choosing an appropriate site for a picnic. Gentlemen had to be careful not to seat their guests near anthills or places without proper shade. Before you send your invitations out, make sure you find a pleasing site with sufficient, but not too much, sunshine for the time of the picnic.*

*During the 19th century, each guest often brought along a dish for a picnic, but eventually, it became customary for one family to organize and provide the food for the picnic. Armed with baskets filled with dishes and utensils, Victorians believed picnics should be just as civilized as eating in a dining room. And the food was just as sumptuous: iced champagne rolled in wet newspapers to preserve the chill, lobster tails with homemade mayonnaise, cold poached chicken with cream sauce, trifle (chunks of pound cake, fresh fruit, rich custard and cream) and whiskey punch to wash it all down. And Victorian picnickers did not dream of eating outdoors without a kerosene burner to boil their kettles for tea.*

*After the last dessert was served, those with musical talents were expected to entertain the party. Games like croquet, tag and blind man's bluff were played. Ladies often conversed with each other. Some would explore the area and look for flowers or wild mushrooms. Men and women followed rules of propriety. It was not looked upon favorably if they wandered away from the party alone for too long. Therefore, when planning your picnic, allow your guests sufficient time to enjoy the surrounding area, and come prepared with some leisure activities in mind.*

*Finally, remember to keep your guests well hydrated, as any thirsty child or adult is more likely not to enjoy an otherwise well-planned outdoor event.*



**Queen Victoria and Family on a picnic at Balmoral.**

**Rockwood Archives at the University of Delaware**  
**Researched by Robin Goldstein, Rockwood Docent**

Interesting tidbits:

- From the Wilmington Evening Journal (date not available), article entitled “Prizewinners at the Kennel Show” – “The Broughton Great Danes belonging to Edward Bringhurst, 5<sup>th</sup>, were the most remarkable dogs at the show and easily carried off honors.”
- In reviewing the names of visitors to Rockwood, there seemed to be quite a few members of Russian nobility. My impression that these were exiles who fled after the 1917 revolution was confirmed after discovering a small booklet for the American Society for Relief of Russian Exiles, Inc. 522 Fifth Avenue, New York, commemorating the “Tenth Anniversary and Final Report 1939”. Schedule 1 listed Individual Donations to the General Fund, January 1, 1938 to February 6, 1939. Included in the list of 21 names was Mr. Edward Bringhurst. A letter extract said “I cannot tell you how sorry I am that the activities of the American Society for Relief of Russian Exiles are discontinued through lack of funds and also through lack of public interest to this question.” Princess M. – Member of the Board of the Russian Red Cross, Paris, January 27, 1939.
- I’ve previously mentioned the Kilwaughter Guest Register, but thought I’d discuss again. Maroon leather with gold lettering, fastened with a brass lock. Measures approx. 10 ½” W x 8” H x 1 ¾” D. Same setup as the Rockwood guest book in terms of columns and info provided/requested.
  - The first entry is Bessie’s. She arrived May 11-1892, left October 12-1892 and said “Sailing on SS City of Paris from Queenstown for our other home”.
  - There were many visits by the Balzani family (Kilwaughter’s actual owner).
  - Edward Bringhurst V, arrived June 15, 1896 & departed Sept 11, 1896. “Fell in the lake, had a good time and want to come back next year”.
  - Billie Gardner duPont visited from 5 October to 13 October 1904, leaving for Hotel DeBrech, Brussels, Belgium.
  - Beatrice Kirk of Thornfield Carrickfergus visited the castle. Was she the wife of Galt’s employer William Kirk?
  - September 1918 had many entries by soldiers (Major, lieutenant, etc). They hailed from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France and South Africa.
  - The guest book’s last entry was Edward Bringhurst V, from Sept 1922 to Oct 24 1922 and simply said he was going “home”
- Edward Bringhurst V resided for a time at the cottage on the estate grounds. There is a maroon leather guest book (7 ¾”W x 5 ½” H x ½” D) entitled 1910 “The Cottage” Rockwood Wilmington Delaware. Entries thru 1914, blank pages in the back of the book were cut out. The next to last signature was Howard Pyle, Wilm Del.

*Friends of Rockwood Holiday Party  
December 12, 2010*



We had our first Lecture in our series, Victorian Postcards, on Sunday, February 13, 2011. There were 27 attendees and two joined our organization. Two people came from Gaithersburg, MD. They had visited Rockwood many years ago and loved it. When they saw the lecture advertised they couldn't resist coming. They were not disappointed.

Rachael Baitch Zeleny, a PhD candidate at the University of Delaware, is writing her dissertation on Victorian Actresses gave a presentation on Victorian postcards. This lecture concentrated on how female artists cultivated their fame and identities through photographic postcards in Victorian Britain. To say the least everyone was quite fascinated with her presentation....ooh la la those Victorian ladies were not shy creatures.

We had a delicious cookie tray donated by Sweets to You by Ginger and a tea fruit punch made and donated by a new docent, Kimberly Bahaman ... thank you to both Ginger and Kimberly.



Rachel & June Zappa, President  
Friends of Rockwood

On Sunday, March 20, 2011. Sara Valentine, a local actress, portrayed Sarah Maguire, one of Rockwood's housekeepers of long ago. Some of you will recognize

Sara in our orientation video. She talked of the Bringhurst family's servants, explaining their roles and the rules that Anna Bringhurst imposed upon them. Sara also discussed the general role of servants in the Victorian era.

This was the second of our lecture series and was well attended.

The lecture was followed by refreshments and a brief tour of the museum, emphasizing Joseph Shiplev's servants.



Rachael Zeleny presented a talk at Rockwood Museum on Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 2 pm. There were 27 guests in attendance to hear her talk on "Victorian Postcards".

She is a University of Delaware PhD candidate and a John Sweeney fellowship recipient. She traveled to England to study an actress, Ellen Terry. Her comments on her trip are on the next page. Her trip was made possible by the Sweeney fellowship and a Global International Travel Grant from the University of Delaware. To say that this trip was invaluable to her research would be an understatement.

Rachael worked as a research assistant for Mark Samuels Lasner and his wonderful Victorian library at the University of Delaware. Mark was a strong supporter of ours to move our archives to the U of D Library.

Mark had collected boxes of material on an actress named Ellen Terry (1847-1928). These boxes contained materials that one fan and friend of Terry's, May Ward, and included three decades of correspondence along with many other objects of interest.

Postcards became popular among actresses of the Victorian Period to promote themselves as proper women, wives and mothers. Many of these women were married to actors.

Previous to this period, "many actresses were considered by many to be prostitutes, regardless of whether or not this was an accurate stereotype" and were portrayed in postcard in many states of undress. When postcards became regulated by the government of England, these cards became acceptable to be sent through the mail. Victorians and Edwardians became obsessed with collected postcards and special scrapbooks were sold for these cards. Postcards showed the pursuits, pastimes, customs, costumes, morals and manners of the time.

Terry used postcards to show herself as a serious actress, lecturer and a model of the "new" woman. She had a profession and was a wife. She did not unnecessarily publicize her children. She and her daughter supported the suffragette movement and promoted it through her postcards.

Some of Ms. Terry's set designs and costumes were designed by Pre-Raphaelite Artist, Burne Jones. She was also briefly married to another PRB artist, George Frederic Watts. (A strong connection to the collection at the Delaware Art Museum).

There was a statement that if a woman did not have time, she wrote a postcard - which were considered vulgar by some.

I wonder if our own Bessie Bringhurst Galt-Smith would have ever written a postcard? To the best of my knowledge, there are none in our archives. I could be wrong, there is so much in our collection.

Judy Filipkowski  
February 16, 2011

## **Rachael Zeleny London Travel Report**

### **Stop 1: British Library**

During my four days at the British Library, I analyzed a number of Ellen Terry related items including Charles Reade's handwritten copy of "Nance Oldfield." Reade tried to sell this script in a desperate attempt for money but he was rejected and his script never made it to the stage or into print. After his death, Terry buys this script from Reade's son and alters it to her liking with Bram Stoker. This play is an instant success to be performed on hundreds of occasions during Terry's lifetime. In juxtaposing this script with Terry's, I was able to see (via annotations, underscoring, drawings, etc) that which was important to the actress and what she changed in order to make the narrative relevant to women of her time. In another archive, I found a letter from Reade's son complimenting Terry on her performance of Nance Oldfield and insisting that his father would have been pleased. I was also able to read the letters sent to Terry's daughter, Edith, when her mother passed away. It was fascinating to observe that the majority of the writers were women, insisting that Terry felt like a member of their family or a close friend.

### **Stop 2: Museum of Richmond "Art, Theatre and the Suffrage Movement" exhibit**

An hour train away from London and located on the top floor of Richmond's Old Town Hall...I did not have my hopes too high. However, I was pleasantly surprised. The curator, Sue Sharp, could not have been more helpful in giving me information about the pieces included in the exhibit. I was able to take pictures of popular postcards circulated at the time, read plays that encouraged women's rights, learn more about the Actress Franchise League, see board games that highlighted paths and obstacles to the vote and of course, dress up in period appropriate attire! As a delightful side bonus, the mayor of Richmond, Tony Arbour, was wandering the exhibit as I was. Upon hearing me talk about Ellen Terry, he offered to sell me a copy of *The Great Actresses of the Day* signed by Ellen Terry!!! How could I refuse? The book is in the mail."

### **Stop 3: Ellen Terry's House!!!!**

This was by far the highlight of the trip. While it was nearly 3 hours and 6 trains away from London, the anticipation only made the experience that much sweeter. I was able to see Terry's personal copy of the Nance Oldfield script that answered several huge questions in my research. Terry had pasted the biography of the historical Oldfield in before the script, clarifying her knowledge of the 18<sup>th</sup> century actress before re-appropriating this figure for her own purposes. Throughout Terry's house, I found a number of relics from 18<sup>th</sup> century theater showing Terry's interest in validating her own existence and reputation through the relics of those before her. Amongst these items was a pair of Ann Oldfield's earrings with which Terry had written a note to her daughter saying, "Wear these and think of me. Love, Nancy Oldfield" confirming my suspicions that Terry's affinity for this character extended far beyond the stage. Below, you will find a photo taken at the first production of Nance Oldfield, a picture of Terry's Rose Garden cottage where she retired, the first page of the Nance Oldfield script with her markings, and a photograph of me taking a picture of myself in Ellen Terry's dressing table mirror found in her bedroom.

**Stop 4. Bonus! Ellen Terry's Wardrobe Closet:** The curators were kind enough to permit me an exclusive look at Terry's costumes that are preserved in a temperature-controlled closet in a separate portion of the house. Not only was the Nance Oldfield costume amongst these items but also the famous beetle wing green dress designed by Edward Burne-Jones as found in the John Singer Sargent painting of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth!! With the ability to see this costume up-close, I am much more prepared to discuss the effect of the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic in shaping Terry's career.

**COSTUME DESIGN BY BURNE-JONES**



## VICTORIAN BALL - Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011

THE VICTORIAN BALL HELD AT THE CARRIAGE HOUSE was a smashing hit. We had over 125 people attend and they danced the night away. The band, String Theory, from the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Delaware was fabulous. The evening started with the Grand March and continued with various dances such as the Virginia Reel, waltz, polka and quadrille.

Most everyone was in period attire ... one lady's dress was prettier than the other. The men looked handsome in a variety of dress from military officers to formal gentlemen of by gone times.

The Friends helped throughout the planning of the Ball by working closely with Loretta Spigel, Rockwood Museum Program Coordinator. We helped her locate a band that was affordable, with the catering menu, etc.; but it was really Loretta who worked so very diligently in putting this event together. Thank you very much Loretta for all your hard work. The Carriage House was a perfect setting for such an event. The Victorian Dance Callers were "Tapestry Dance Troop" and Alias DuPuy did a skit on Victorian women.

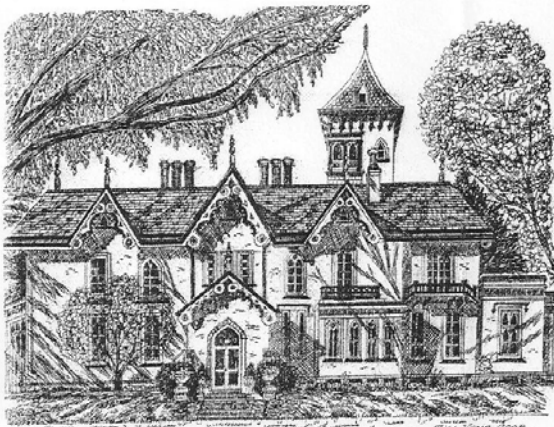
The Friends also held a silent auction, a 50/50 raffle, a wine bar and provided a photographer to take pictures in a Victorian vignette setting. We would be very neglectful if we didn't thank the many Friends who helped provide wonderful items for the silent auction and donated wine. We had a wonderful response to our requests and our offerings included Senate cufflinks donated by Senator Chris Coons and a book entitled "History of the United States Capital" donated and inscribed by Senator Tom Carper.





Twelve docents & friends went on a wonderful tour of this 1855 mansion. The Dixons, who were the architects for our Porter's lodge, designed it. They also designed the Wilmington Opera House. There were some similarities to Rockwood including a forced air coal heating system, a cistern on the roof for the bathroom and faux finished doors. Lesley Manor, however, had a hot water system and a dumb waiter from the basement kitchen up to the first and second floor. Mr. Deemer, who put in electricity along with a burglar alarm system, bought the house in 1903. An enormous amount of construction has been required to restore this house by current owners, Barb and Marty Wright.

## Lesley Manor



Built: Circa 1855  
 Original Owner: Allen Voorhees  
 Lesley, MD and wife Jane  
 Architect: Thomas and James  
 Dixon, Baltimore, MD  
 Builder: Augustine Van Kirk, Salem,  
 NJ

Technological Features: Gas  
 lighting (coal gas through the city),  
 central heat, hot and cold running  
 water, indoor toilet, burglar alarm  
 when electricity was added.

Addition: Circa 1870: 2-story kitchen  
 wing and several rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup>  
 and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors.

Working basement: kitchen,  
 laundry, workman's bath.

### Currently:

Rooms: 24 in the main house plus 10 in the basement. This does not include bathrooms but does include 10 bedrooms.

Bathrooms: 6 full and 5 half

Remaining Fireplaces: 10

Carriage house: 2 -2 bedroom townhomes with kitchen, living room and bathroom.

### Architectural style and features:

Neo-Gothic and Italianate, 5-story tower, complex millwork, indoor shutters and shutter pockets, elaborate plaster ceiling medallions and crown moulding, pointed arches, pocket doors, chimney pots, bargeboard trim, iron window sills and hood mouldings, and decorative trim. Rectangular iron monogrammed mouldings around the western alcove windows. 13 ½ ft ceilings on 1<sup>st</sup> and 12 ft on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. Brick load-bearing walls on stone foundation.

Current property: 1.5 acres which includes the carriage house with a separate entrance off of Deemer Place.

National Registry of Historic Places: 1973

## SMALL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Small Museum Association (SMA) is an all volunteer organization serving small museums in the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond. It has approximately 275 members; of this number 10 are Delaware museums.

Donna Fox, Friends of Rockwood board member & Rockwood docent and Loretta Spigel, Rockwood Program Coordinator, attended this conference which was held in Ocean City, MD on February 21, 2011. There were 250 attendees for this 3-day conference; we only attended one day. What a wealth of information we gathered as well as networking with similar museums in our area!

The conference theme was “Bringing Museums to Life”. There were 20 sessions held on the day we attended covering subjects such as heritage spaces, taxes, picture taking, digital collections, grant writing, theater, advocacy, costumes, community support, disaster planning. We selected 6 along with attending the keynote address. By the time we left in late afternoon, our minds were brimming over with the ideas we heard not only from the speakers but other attendees.

The one thread that ran through the entire day was that we are all struggling to attract people to our museums. It is not only the economy but the way we interact with our visitors. The “guided” tour is no longer what visitors want. Their preferences are more interaction with the staff (not the scripted dialogue), hands on experiences (especially for children), or self-guided tours. Museums also need to take a look at their surrounding community and assess if it has changed since the museum was started. If so, how do we engage with the new culture and adapt our programs to interest them in visiting? Lastly, how do we use technology to bring us alive? Suggestions ranged from updating our website & literature with current pictures of activities, whether it be events or renovations, to making your scripted tour available on cell phones.

Loretta and I reported to Rockwood staff on what we heard and hopefully some of the ideas and suggestions can be implemented to increase visitors to our “hidden gem”.

*Donna Fox*  
*Docent*

**The Friends of Rockwood  
610 Shipley Road  
Wilmington, Delaware  
19809**

**HELP US SAVE POSTAGE.....**

We would like to have your e-mail address so  
we  
may send you notices about upcoming events  
and the Newsletter.

**If you no longer wish to receive this  
Information, e-mail Beth Morgera,  
Membership Chair,  
[membership@friendsofrockwood.org](mailto:membership@friendsofrockwood.org).**

Please put FOR in the subject box.

**or**

**the Friends address on this newsletter**