

# Regency

## HOUSE PARTY

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### *Feature: Q & A*

**REGENCY HOUSE PARTY's** intrepid time travelers sacrificed everything from mini-skirts and running water to spaghetti and cosmetics in the hopes of finding their soul mates. What was life really like behind the walls of Kentchurch Court? Now back in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the partygoers answer a few questions about looking for love in Regency England.

### *What aspect of Regency life did you have the most trouble accepting?*

**Larushka Ivan-Zadeh, Countess Griaznov (Highest-ranking female guest):** The day-to-day lack of independence for the ladies. You couldn't put the kettle on, dress yourself, or even know the time (no watches) without asking a 'servant.'

**Lisa Braund (Gentlewoman):** For me it was the double standard between men and women.

**Hayley Conick (Gentlewoman):** STATUS! Everything revolved around it – where you slept, where you sat at dinner, your wardrobe, when you could have a bath (and whether you got clean water), your ability to do fun things. It was a microcosm of how society was then, and in many ways how it still is.

**John Everett (Wealthy gentleman):** Easy! Dinner times! Agonizingly slow, served at six, it would drag on for hours and we'd be there boiling hot in all our clothes, sitting inside, candles blazing at the nicest time of day.

### *Speaking of dinner, how was the food?*

**Victoria Hopkins (Industrial Heiress):** The food was unbelievable. The chef has a lot to answer for – mainly the chocolate meringue. I put on so much weight, none of my clothes fit me when I came out!

**Francesca Martin (Lady's Companion):** Suckling pig ... incredible!

**John Everett:** Strange ... I yearned for a plate of spaghetti or a good chili.

REGENCY HOUSE PARTY is a production of Wall To Wall Television in association with Thirteen/WNET New York.

*And aside from spaghetti and chili, what did you miss most about the 21<sup>st</sup> century?*

**Elizabeth, Lady Devenport (Chaperone to Victoria Hopkins):** Bathrooms and physical freedom.

**Larushka Ivan-Zadeh, Countess Griaznov:** Cinema and contact lenses.

**Francesca Martin:** Make-up, short skirts, flashy tops, the exfoliators, the hair straighteners, the shampoo ... I'm not a massive fan of natural beauty!

**Hayley Conick:** We would have been grateful for some deodorant – it was so hot, and we thought rubbing lemons under our armpits worked, but I've been since informed that they did not.

**Jeremy Glover (Gentleman naval captain):** The things I thought I'd miss I didn't – email, phones, TV. I missed little things like breakfast cereal. The two *biggest* things I missed were physical contact – not just sex, but holding someone, being able to express affection and intimacy.

*How did the Regency quest for a mate compare to dating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?*

**Chris Gorell Barnes (Master of Kentchurch Court, party host, highest-ranking male):** One didn't really "date" in the Regency. It was marriage or nothing! I found it very annoying not being able to have a friendly chat with a girl unchaperoned, and *such* gossip circulated if you *were* able to sneak a quick conversation.

**John Everett:** What I disliked about Regency dating was also what I found intriguing about it – the formality of the courtship process.

**Jeremy Glover:** To fancy someone I need to get to know them to some degree. This was very difficult in the house, with the various separate activities for men and women and chaperones keeping us apart. In the Regency, courtship, even in its infancy, had to be carried out in full view of the micro-society around us with all its rules of etiquette.

**Victoria Hopkins:** In the house I was one of the lucky ones – I could have married for love. But marriage was a business for the majority in the Regency and I think it must have been very sad for those who were forced into marrying a muppet for money or social standing.

*Some of you played characters that ranked higher on the social ladder than others. What was that like?*

**Hayley Conick:** [When I saw my profile], and it said that I was the lowest status woman and as such would have to pay extra close attention to the rules and the wishes of my hostess and that I wouldn't have the advantages the other girls had ... it really threw me. It was also frustrating how ignorant people higher up in the order were of how things were at the bottom. And there was some ridiculous snobbery.

**Mark Foxsmith (Gentleman cleric and tutor):** I hated the class divisions and not being allowed to treat the “servants” as people and equals.

**Fiona Rogers (Chaperone to Countess Griaznov and Tanya Samuel):** I found it very sad that some people seemed to think that the status they were given in the house reflected reality. In Regency times, “breeding” was the most important thing, whereas now it is “celebrity status” that counts. So nothing really changes, I suppose!

**Larushka Ivan-Zadeh, Countess Griaznov:** In order to stay in Regency character, most of the other girls couldn’t be permitted to do all the fun stuff I could, and I found that constantly frustrating.

*What are your thoughts on Regency fashion?*

**Lisa Braund:** I loved the corset and the clothes and having my hair dressed for the evenings.

**Victoria Hopkins:** [Among the most annoying things about the experience] were having to wear four layers of clothes in the heat, and the bonnets.

**Mark Foxsmith:** Two of my jackets were very ill-fitting and got ripped, which made me very uncomfortable and hot.

**Hayley Conick:** I never thought I’d take to the girly dresses and parasols, but I think I regressed slightly and came to quite like them. I definitely predict Regency fans will be the must-have accessory next summer.

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