# Poetry of motion

Image: http://www.avictorian.com/sports/skating_roller_061.jpg

My teammate Drakecula came across a bunch of old poems about roller skating in Trove, (some from the 1880s!) so I thought it would be fun to pop them into a zine along with pics, articles, and random stuff I found along the way!

Big thanks to Drake for giving me the idea in the first place.

Also, Trove (trove.nla.gov.au) and Papers Past (paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers) are awesome. You should check them out.

Enjoy...

xx Blinky Kill


Winslow's roller skates, size 9 [realia] / Samuel Winslow Skate Manufacturing Company.
http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/282278

**Observer, 30 May 1885**
http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/T018850530.2.108

SHE's doing some fancy skating,
Scornfully curling her lips up,
Speed is accelerating—
She's doing some fancy skating.—
And calmly annihilating.
The poor little dudelet she trips;
She's doing some fancy skating,
Scornfully curling her lips up.

**Roller skating - The Narracoorte Herald, 14 July 1911:**
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article147223411

Gaily gliding,
Smoothly sliding,
O'er the polished floor!
Poetry of motion such as never was before.
Onward sweeping,
Never creeping,
Round and round the track—
Sizz!
Whizz!
Flat upon my back!
Up and swinging,
Onward flinging,
Singing as I swing,
Round about the place I'm soaring like a bird on wing,
Ever flying,
Never sighing,
Round and round, and then—
Whang!
Bang!
Down I go again!
Up and speeding,
All unheeding,
On my way I go,
Like an errant bob-sled sliding o'er the frosty snow.
Never fretting,
Pirouetting,
Like a dancer plump—
Rip!

Zip!
Golly, what a bump!
Once more skating
Undulating,
Free of every care!
Like a fleck of filmy cloud-mist flirt-
ing through the air.
Swiftly swerving,
Swaying, curving,
In a dreamy dance —
Ow!
Wow!
Call an ambulance!

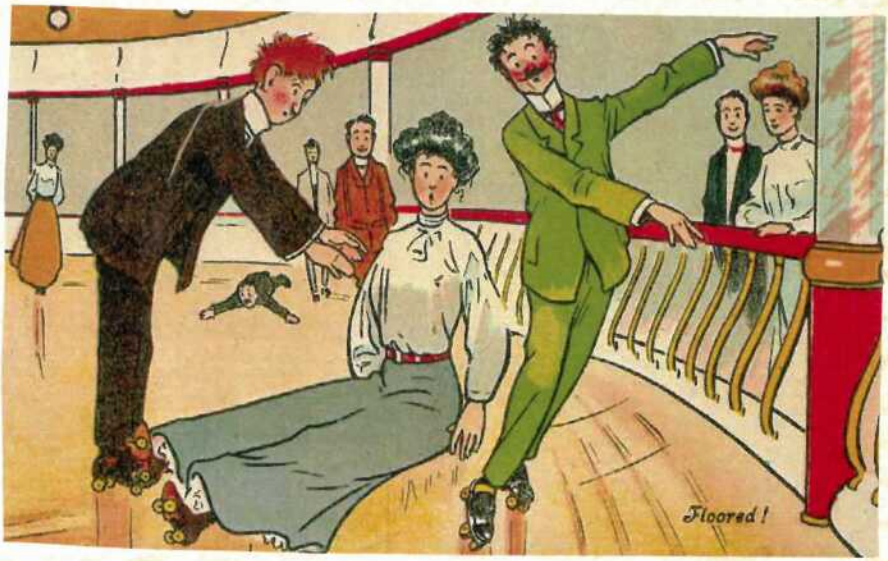


Image: http://www.metropostcard.com/topicalsr.html

**New Zealand Tablet, 24 March 1910**

http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/NZT19100324.2.50

## A Costly Skate.

Roller skating is older than most folk imagine. Joseph Merlin, a Belgian, born in 1735, a clever, inventive fellow, went to London in 1760 and exhibited his novelties at a museum in Spring Gardens, and afterwards in Prince's street, Hanover Square., Having made a pair of skates to run on wheels, he appeared with them at a masked ball given by Mrs. Cornelys, in Carlisle House, Soho. He was duly invited to display his skill. Having put on the skates he took a violin and began whirling about to his own music. One thing he had not studied, however, and that was how to guide himself and to stop quickly, and the result was that before the performance had lasted very long he dashed into an immense mirror valued at £1000, smashed his fiddle to bits, and seriously injured himself. That appears to have dampened the spirit of inventors, for we hear nothing of other wheel skates for nearly half a century.

(fun fact: it works out to over AUD$300,000 today!)

JOSEPH MERLIN (1735-1803)
PORTRAIT BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

**The Skating Girl, Table Talk, E.S. 23 August 1900**

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article145936026

In a frock so trim and natty,
With a captivating smile,
In a manner chic and chatty,
With an air of splendid style,
She goes sailing round serenely,
Gliding, sliding, striding past,
Sometimes full of grace, and queenly,
Sometimes as a whirlwind, fast.

Eyes a-kindle, face a-glowing,
She grows radiantly bright,
Till the rose in April blowing
By comparison's a fright;
With a poise of head so pretty
With a bend of form so sweet,
That you think it's quite a pity
She has rollers on her feet.

For you somehow think more sweetly
She has wings like any sprite.
And you lose your head completely
In a vision of delight.
Then you fear she may rise winging
Like a bird, her course above,
And your heart's the minstrel singing
Out a roundelay of love.

Till there dawns a bold desire
To approach the spirit fair,
And your soul is all a-fire
At the vision whirling there.

But she flashes past securely
With a flap of angel wings,
And an eye cast down demurely
While the poet in you sings.

Sings and serenades the fairy,
Till the light of reason breaks.
And Calliope turns wary
With a lust for winning stakes.
Ah! the mutilated feeling
When your eyes turn up the sight
And you recognise the reeling
Roller-skater in afright.

Now no more the flying figure
Crown with Heaven-scaling wings,
'Tis a robust girl with vigour
Skating round in madd'ning rings.
There's a glimpse of ankles sturdy,
There's a whisking of a skirt
There's a band or hurdy-gurdy
And the friskings of a flirt.

Nothing else, but mad. conviction
And the spinning of the wheels
All the poetry of motion
That the rinker knows or feels.
And the dazzling lights glare ever
On- the mad revolving throng,
Shining on the quick and clever,
Scorching out the soul of Song.


**Good grades and good health go together : City of Chicago Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium :PGet your test now. WPA Federal Art Project, Chicago, Ill, 1936.**

http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3f05185/

**Roller skating - by Nero, Courier-Mail, 18 January 1934**

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11161208

I CONSIDER roller skating
Is a sport exhilarating.
If this be your way of thinking
Let us go together-rinking.
All beginners slip and stumble,
But nobody minds a tumble.
If you were to practice daily
You would soon be rinking gaily.
Steady there! Be persevering,
Every step the goal you're nearing.
Never over failures grieving,
Soon success you'll be achieving.


http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_NC4d7MFA2Mk/Sh6CN1HNzII/AAAAAAAABcE/Z6tGxsWqbs4/s1600-h/Roller+Skating+Postcard.jpg

**Observer, 5 January 1889**

http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/T018890105.2.12

# RINK ITEMS.

## Columbia Rink.

LADIES.

—Miss Last is a pretty little skater; her dainty white dress, pink satin sash, and large hat, are very effective on wheels.

—Miss Gordon's fancy skating is much admired, so is her delicious pink gown, costumed with art folds, and ravissante Gem hat, banded and trimmed with white ribbon.

—Miss Yandle's style is very graceful. The effect of her gyrations is enhanced by a dark skirt, cream Norfolk jacket, and jaunty velvet Huzzar cap, banded with gold.

—Miss L. White looked charming the other evening skimming over the kauri in a bewitching white gown, beautifully embroidered; white tulle hat fastened by a silver dagger; long white silk gloves.

—Miss Henderson is quite *au fait* in roller manipulation. Her movements are quiet and graceful. Her pretty blue toilette, supplemented by a tall hat cascaded with lace, and long white silk gloves, is charmingly becoming.

—Miss Clarke can waltz to perfection on wheels; she is about the best pourtrayer of the mazy feat at the 'Only Rink.' Her cream dress enlivened by tints of crimson, is very effective.

—Miss — Aylette is a particularly graceful skater; her long curves are the very poetry of motion. Her latest rink toilette is composed of pale blue cambric; a picturesque hat of the same material, finished with a bow of ribbon; white silk gloves.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - GLIMPSES OF LIFE AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL - A FASHIONABLE ROLLER SKATING RINK, 1880. PHOTOGRAPH
https://www.loc.gov/item/2005694682/

DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING WIGGLE

PRACTICAL

TO MAKE you will need matching thread, three s... 8, four buttons 1... 2 a smocking tra...

TACK AND FIT garment... tions before stitching.

...ll seams and dar...

Overcasting

Overcasting prevents ...urved seams. It is ...ost to line of stitch ...llow these to lie fla...

DRESS



GENTLEMEN.

—Mr Warren does it on one leg—reminds us of a sign scientifically disjointed: there is such a flow of grace in his movements.

—Mr Norton keeps up steam by a graceful evolution of both arms. His dark blue serge toilette, enlivened by a crimson *boutonniere*, is deliciously becoming,

—Mr Russell's skating is greatly enhanced by the effect of a handsome diamond ring, which modestly conceals its charms while employed in twirling a tawny moustache.

—Mr Kenderdine (not Jack) waltzes like an angel, does its backward, and can stand on one leg; he finishes some of his feats in a sitting posture, wonderfully effective as far as the floor is concerned.

—Mr Shera's latest tailorial triumph utilised at the rink is a *recherche* combination comprising light trousers, black coat, two-inch collar (we are open to correction as to altitude, and fairy-like tie of cream; gloves are the only missing link.

—Mr Martin's gyrations are the very essence of poetry; pity he should waste his proficiency mingling with the commonplace rinkists. A requisition signed by influential skatists might induce him to perform his fancy feats in the centre of the hall.

of slit.

(f) Turn in ¼ inch on free edge and slipstitch to seam. Fold facing on right back to inside on seam, overlapping extending facing on left back.

(g) Pare seam allowance on neck to ¼ inch. Face neck with bias ma-

PATTERN NO. 1895

EWING HINTS

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Curved seams

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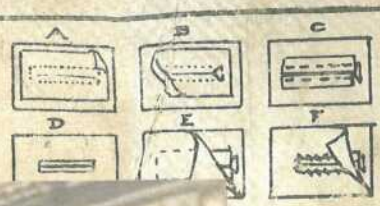


ide and 1" longer
finished buttonhole.
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line of tacking to
iagonally to corners
inside.
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ition of buttonhole,
d hem. Press well.


**COAT (EITHER VIEW). French Seams are Advised.**

(a) VIEW C: Make pleats outside of front and back by folding on each line of medium holes and placing to line of small holes; tack and press.

(b) VIEW D: For smocking, iron trans-

**"Gentle" Art Of Skating - by Valerie Claridge, Barrier Miner, 27 June 1938**

http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/47975321

Now this sport is to quite a few
A finished art, but to me it's new.
And learning means a fall or two
This roller skating.
I've tried to glide but hit the ground,
My balance lost before it's found.
Those others still go skating round
All roller skating.
It seems to me a round of hefty
bumps,
Pushes and shoves and biffs, and
thumps.
I go home a lot of bruises and bumps,
From roller skating.
My clothes are all dirty, and grease
right through,
My shoulder-blade damaged (and
other things too)
My elbow is skinned and my knee
bruised blue,
Through roller skating.
It seems pretty hopeless, but may be
some day
I'll learn how to do it the very best
way,
And then I'll be able to stand when
they say
"Come roller skating."


**Image: Patinage [à roulettes] au Vel d'hiv [deux patineuses] : [photographie de presse] / [Agence Rol]**

http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6924319s/f1.highres

## On the skates - Bacchus Marsh Express, 18 August 1888

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89683029

Hear the thunder of the skates, roller skates,
How my soul so supersensitive, their row infernal hates !
When I'm half-a-mile, or more,
from the door,
Comes the deafening maddening rolling
Of those wheels upon the floor
That maddening, monotonous, reverberating roar
Of the skates.
Hear the whirring and the whizzing of the skates,
Mark the unaccustomed antics, struggles, ludi crously frantic,
As each figure there gyrates,
In a human panorama, 'mid a cacophonic clamour,
Men and women, girls and boys.
Make a horrid, hideous noise,
Like a huge Titanic hammer
That some Hercules employs
Oh ! those skates.
See the skater on the wheels-how he reels !
Oh ! see the the look of agony his countenance reveals,
As he knows, and he feels,
That his toes, and his heels,
Are quite beyond controlling, when he once commences rolling.
On those wheels !
They are either brass or wooden,
And they'll let him down so sudden

On his seat,
That he'll wonder, wonder, wonder,
At the awful clap of thunder,
When the floor rose up from under
neath his feet.
Hear the rumbling,-see the tumbling, on the
skates!
How each joist, and beam, and rafter
Oscillates !
Hear the mocking sound of laughter
That each downfall follows after,
And all the tender feeling of the victim
lacerates;
For the public sitting there
With expectant eager air,
Diabolically waits till the tyro on the skates
Tumbles down, like a stone,
With a frown, and a groan,
And then, rising in confusion,
Madly rubs each sore contusion,
Swearing skating's a delusion
And a snare.
There's the expert on his gliding, skimming
skates !
See him heading, swaying, leaning,
Like a ship he goes careening,
Doing "in" and "outside edges," doing sinuous
"figure eights";
Swiftly nearing, disappearing,
Verging, veering, deftly steering,
He pauses not a moment, and he never hesitates;
But faster flies, and faster,
Never fearing for disaster,
For he's evidently master
Of the skates.

LONG POEM, KEEP GOING!

See them thunder, glide, and blunder on the
Skates.
How their dignity each tumble irritates !
How they roll, roll, roll,
How they clash, collide, and clink,
Till they agonize my soul
By their clatter at the Rink.
Round and round, and round again,
In a sort of endless chain
A chain of human beings, where each skater forms
a link,
He is wise who hesitates, ere he rashly tempts
the Fates,
By trusting his"anatomy" on those deceptive
skates.
At the Rink.
So they ceaselessly continue on the skates,
With a vigour no catastrophe abates;
Circuitously wheeling in an intertwining scroll.
So they roll, roll, roll.
And the tumbles pay the toll
On a journey that's monotonous, and meaning
less, and droll,
On a gyratory journey, that no object has, or
goal;
But because it is the fashion, they must all insanely
roll
On the running, rumbling, risky
Roller skates.


CAPRIOLO
PARATICO
ANDRO
No 17807
U.S. POSTAGE
ONE CENT
YOU GO TO THE RINK TO SKATE,
NOT TO WRESTLE.
THIS SIDE FOR CORRESPONDE

**The Seven ages of the Roller Skater, The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser 20 December 1889**

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article189970433

## *POETRY.*

### The Seven Ages of the Roller Skater.

ALL the world's a rink,
And all the men and women merely skaters;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time play many parts,
His acts being seven stages: At first the ragged
Urchin, rolling neath the sidewalk on one skate,
The terror of all the passers by. Then the
Beginner, led around the maple with
Awkward steps and sudden plunges, perspiration
Streaming from his every pore, a sight to look upon.
And then the callow youth, with cap on head
Bearing the word "Instructor" in gilt letters,
Whose duty 'tis, as he considers it, to skate
With all the pretty girls, and leave the struggling
Learners to themselves. Then comes the fancy skater,
The Professor, who travels all the country round
To fill engagements; a tremendous hero—
In his own estimation. And then the fair
Young damsel, who glides around the floor as if
It was her native element, and roller
Skating her usual mode of locomotion.
Then the mature matron, with golden eye-glasses,
Rolling around with stately dignity,
Gazing with calm placidity upon
The giddy throng. Last stage of all, that
Ends this short nonsensicality, is
Paterfamilias, or erst the "Governor,"
Who comes to bring the children,
But, having been enticed to put on skates,
Still comes, and comes, and comes again,
And seems to like it.

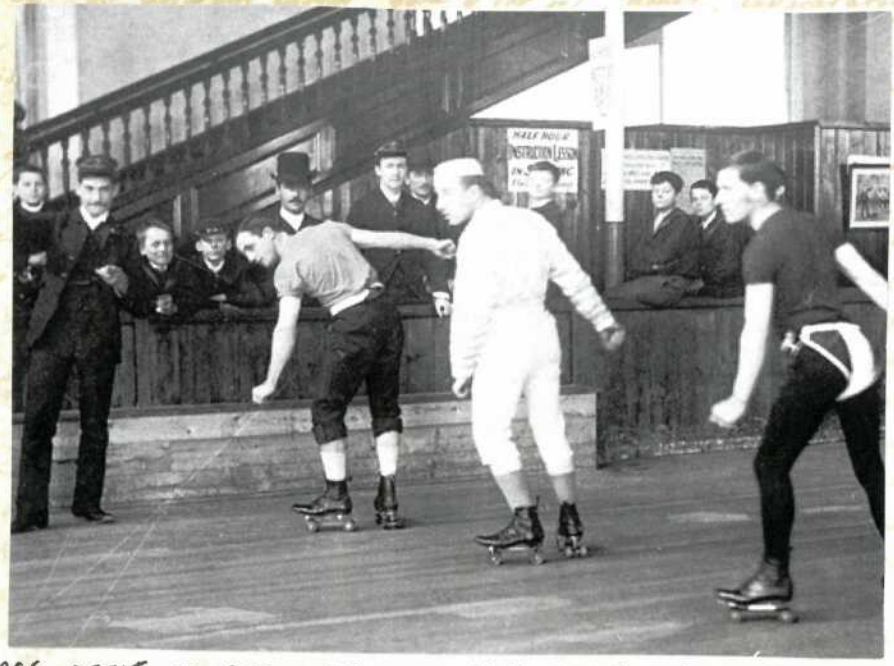
## WORKING FOR PLEASURE: THE ROLLER-SKATER'S ROUNDABOUT.

DRAWN BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, S. BEGG.

RINKING IN ITS NEWEST FORM: ROLLER-SKATERS TURNING A "ROUNDABOUT."

We illustrate the latest development of the new craze, a form of roundabout turned by energetic roller-skaters, who, it will be noticed, "carry-bag," and so not only turn the arrangement, but are prevented from falling should their feet leave the ground. The machine is in use at the Hampstead Roller-Skating Palace.

**Image: Illustrated London News. December 18, 1909**



RACE ABOUT TO GET UNDERWAY AT A ROLLER SKATING RINK
https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/B+59548

**New Zealand Herald, 22 December 1910**

http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19101222.2.120.7

Cupid, you're like the straps upon a skater,
You bind and squeeze our soles until they smart
O, may you never be the perpetrator
Of such a crushing feet on my poor heart.

**CLUTHA LEADER, VOLUME XIV, ISSUE 725, 8 JUNE 1888,**
https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CL18880608.2.30

# THE SONG OF THE RINK.

My song is of the rinking here,
Upon a form I'm seated ;
Before me kneels my love, my dear,
His glowing face is heated ;
He buckles on my roller skates,
From duty never shrinking,
And e'en of love he fondly prates,
When I'm rinking, rinking, rinking.

I rink about the hall so wide,
As if by demons hunted ;
From end to end, from side to side,
Until at length I'm shunted ;
Vainly I try to clutch the wall,
While to the floor I'm sinking,
And not unfrequently I fall,
When I'm rinking, rinking, rinking.

Sometimes upon one knee I drop,
To save myself from sprawling ;
Sometimes upon my honor flop,
Down backwards I go falling ;
Then quickly to my feet I spring,
Fly round the room like winking,
For my heart's as light as anything,
When I'm rinking, rinking, rinking.

F. L. W.

Balclutha, June 4, 1888.


THE DRUM WALTZ

**The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, 21 March 1885**

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article163276695

"A roller skate is a nice skate, but an ice skate is not a roller skate"

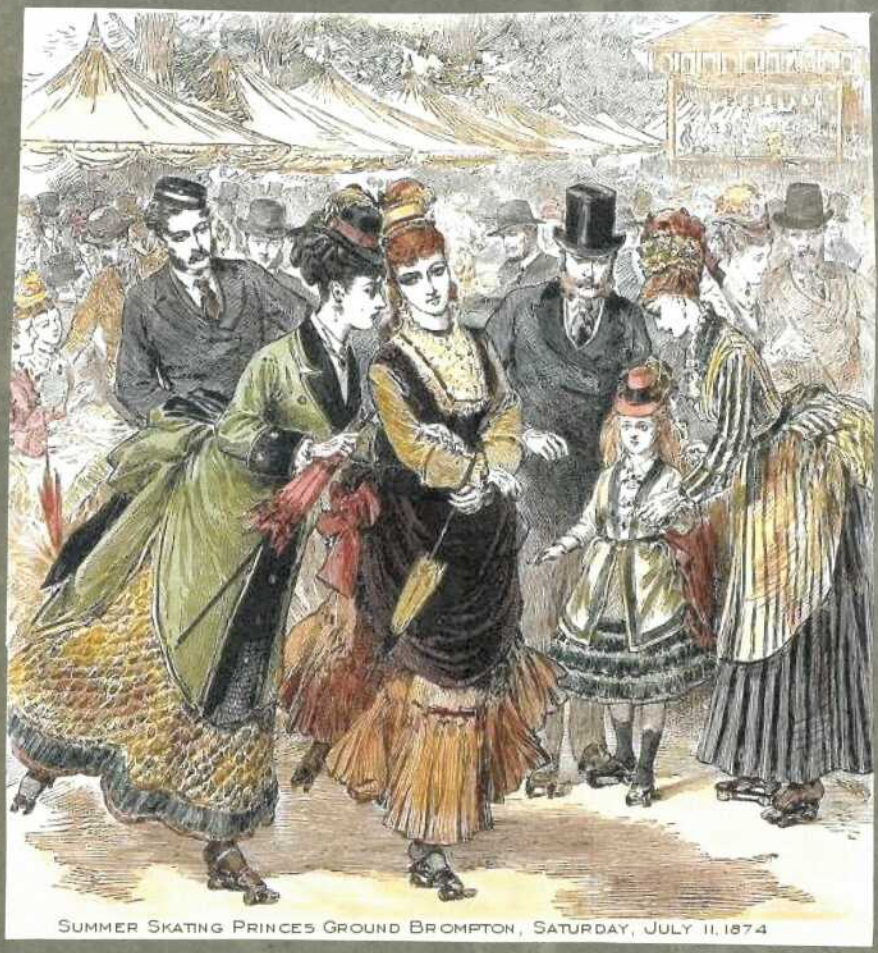



Image:
http://www.avictorian.com/sports/skating_roller_Princes_Ground_Brompton_C1874.jpg


Roller
Skate
Craze
The Nursemaid
and the Baby