

Trust's Historic Sites Open in September

If you've been meaning to visit the many historic sites and museums throughout Berks County, this September would be a good time to do that. Two events will offer self-guided tours at dozens of historic sites and museums throughout the County, including those of the Historic Preservation Trust.

Fall into Berks History

September 29—10am to 4pm

On Saturday, September 29, the Trust will sponsor its 2nd annual *Fall into Berks History* property tour. This is an opportunity to visit all of the Trust's 18th-century buildings. In addition to Morlatton Village, you can visit the Keim Homestead and DeTurk Cabin in the Oley Valley, and the Hottenstein House in Kutztown. Guided tours will be offered at each site. Tickets are \$10 each (children 12 & under free) and can be purchased the day of the tour at any of the sites. Please see the enclosed flier for more details, or visit our web site: www.historicpreservationtrust.org



The Keim Homestead (1753) is one of eight 18th-century buildings that will be open for tours on September 29.



Berks Hidden Heritage Tour

September 8 and September 9

On Saturday, September 8 and Sunday, September 9, the Berks Heritage Council will present the Berks Hidden Heritage Tour. For a donation of \$5 you can visit over twenty sites, including Morlatton Village. The enclosed flier has more details, including a list of the sites that will be open.

Are you planning an event?

From weddings and birthday parties to small meetings and gatherings, the White Horse Inn may be the perfect setting for your special occasion. Located in historic Morlatton Village, Douglassville, the White Horse has a modern kitchen and seating for up to 60 guests. For more information about renting this fully restored 18th century Inn, please contact the Trust's office at 610-385-4762 or info@historicpreservationtrust.org.

From the President

I am excited once again to be president of the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County. It is an honor to have been elected for another term. I hope the Trust is as successful under my renewed tenure as it has been over the past four years of Matt Barnhart's tenure.

We have a lot of work before us, primarily to get our financial house in order. During the past few years the Trust has successfully accomplished much to preserve its buildings, developed an archive system for the Trust's historic records and opened the buildings to the public. However, a firm and permanent financial footing has continued to elude us, even though the Trust's many friends have continued to be very financially supportive. The Trust faces mounting operating costs. For example, our annual insurance premiums are now almost \$24,000. Graciously, a local benefactor has agreed to match all donations in 2012 dedicated for insurance premiums. Please consider a donation, which will be matched, toward this cost.

The Trust has accomplished a great deal during the past four years thanks to the tireless efforts of Matt Barnhart and the other members of the Board. The Trust owes a great thanks to the Shelley Fund and the efforts of Larry Ward and Steve Kindig. We must always remember the thoughtfulness of Donald Shelley and his interest in the unique group of 18th-century buildings that are now the responsibility of the Trust. We also owe great thanks to Esther Shelley, Donald's widow, and a perennial benefactor of the Trust. While in recognition mode, I must also mention all of the work of the Board and the membership during the past several years facilitating the Trust's active involvement in the preservation and use of the Trust properties.

Work on the Keim House, including removal of the early 20th-century porch, is bringing out its historic architectural beauty. Removal of the porch's substantial concrete mass—with its tendency to draw moisture into the wall stones and mortar—should benefit the house's long term structural integrity. The architectural features uncovered by the porch removal are truly fascinating.

Substantial preservation work was also done on the Michael Fulp house, including rebuilding much of the deteriorated south wall. Historical research was done on the house and its builder, Michael Fulp. We learned much about the life of an ordinary man in the middle to late 18th century. A house was saved and its unique history was recorded. The Trust's former "Bridge Keeper's" house has new integrity and significance.

Much progress has also been made on the George Douglass House. Late-addition porch roofs were removed from the back of the house, bringing out much architectural interest and beauty. Work on the interior of the house has highlighted the fine detail of the original architecture and woodwork. The fine structural proportions and layout of the house signify this as the showcase home of a wealthy mid 18th-century family. We can finally appreciate the beauty of this house.

The Trust's archive project has finally made many of the Trust's historical and architectural records available to the public. The project has provided the Trust with an efficient and permanent record of most of its business and historical records and photographs. The volume of artifacts and records possessed by the Trust is truly amazing.

The new parking lot at Morlatton Village is a long needed addition. Off street parking is now available for visitors to the Trust's buildings and users of the adjacent Thun Trail. The parking lot is being used by the public. The Trust appreciates the support of the Township with regard to this project.

On a terribly disturbing note, as I write this the historic Zimmerman house (at the corner of Route 222 and Long Lane in Maxatawny Township) is being razed. Berks County has lost another significant structure to a developer. Little notice of the proposed destruction was given, and it appears that Maxatawny Township did little or nothing to delay or prevent it.

The Trust has a very dedicated and knowledgeable Board and membership. I wish to thank all of them, especially Matt Barnhart, for all the dedicated work they have performed for the Trust in the past and, I am certain, will continue into the future. I am looking forward to working with all of the parties involved with the Trust in the coming year.



John Hibsichman

New Board Members & Officers

The membership voted to accept the Nominating Committee's slate for the next year at the Annual Meeting held July 11, 2012:

President John Hibsichman	Vice President Bradford Kissam
Secretary Michelle Lynch	Financial Secretary Leslie Rebmann

Current board members Tom Keim and Lauren Archibald will each serve another three-year term. Also elected to three-year terms were Lou Zmroczek and Lenette Wells. Lou is returning to the Board after completing her Masters degree in English. Lenette is a principal and manager of architectural services at Entech Engineering, where she specializes in historic preservation. The Committee also expressed their appreciation to departing board members Priscilla Walsky and Becky Gottschall, both of whom have worked tirelessly to promote the goals and objectives of the Trust.

Sites & Structures Updates

George Douglass House

Carpenters Tom and Chris Lainhoff continue to restore the center “hallway” and elaborately paneled and articulated staircase. Most of the original woodwork has been re-installed or re-aligned in original locations, including the robust miter-joined cornice. The “jack-arch” and displaced masonry above the front doorway were reconstructed and leveled.

A study is underway to determine whether architectural design details at John Potts’ manor house (“Pottsgrove,” c.1752) might have influenced George Douglass and his builders. The elements being considered include doorways, staircases, plastered cove cornice, coursed and dressed sandstone façade, pent roof, floor plan, paneling and molding profiles, window construction, fireplaces, and other components.

Archaeology

Chapter 21 of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology is conducting a “dig” in the cellar floor of the Johan DeTurk house. The group unearthed several artifacts that will be catalogued in the Trust’s archives. A major objective of the project is to determine the original elevations and paving of the floor and fireplace hearth. Archaeological excavation and mapping on the southwest side of the Mouns Jones House resumed in early August. Chapter 21 archaeologists will be on-site for September Trust events to explain their work and findings.

Morlatton Village Parking Areas:

Work on Phase I of the Morlatton Village Parking area was completed and in use by the end of June. Substantial progress on Phases 3 and 4, located in the wooded area along Swede Lane in the lower village, has also been made. This parking facility, boasting space for nearly 70 vehicles, greatly increases the Trust’s ability to exhibit and interpret its historic structures, especially its ability to accommodate special events.

The parking area’s boundaries consist of locust logs harvested onsite, set on support blocks, and weighted down by 50,000 pounds of “ballast,” the stone base and gravel surface. In addition to logs and ballast, embankments outside the logs should prevent material loss due to flooding. Amity Township generously provided the land, construction equipment, and skilled personnel who supervised and executed the labor. Brian Boyer Engineering; Hopewell Nursery, Excavating & Trucking Co.; Exeter Supply Co.; Moses B. Glick LLC; Greg Zook Welding Co; Monty’s Mulch; Weaver’s/Ace Hardware; and Total Rentals furnished additional expertise, equipment, services, and materials. The project is funded by grants from The Shelley Pennsylvania German Heritage Fund and the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and its contributing partners.

Surplus Material Sale:

The Trust is continuing the sale of firewood logs, surplus window sash, doors, shutters, floor boards, and other early architectural artifacts not related to its structures or mission. Those interested in purchasing any of these items should contact the Trust’s office by phone, email, or through the website at historicpreservationtrust.org. All proceeds will be applied to the preservation of the Trust’s structures.



Reconstruction & re-leveling of Douglass House jack-arch

Annual Meeting Held at the White Horse

The Trust’s Annual Meeting was held at the White Horse Inn on July 11. Members helped themselves to a smorgasbord of food in the tavern room. Some brought their own pewter dinner plates, which added to the eighteenth-century atmosphere – like a tavern without the ale! Everyone is encouraged to join this annual event. New members are always welcome!

After dinner, upcoming Trust officers were voted on prior to a presentation by Board member Jim Lewars. Jim is Site Director at the Landis Valley Museum in Lancaster County and previously served as administrator at nearby Daniel Boone Homestead. His presentation focused on the challenges of operating a historic site when funds are in short supply. He cited several examples of sites that have been shut down or scaled back due to lack of funding. The Lancaster County Quilt and Textile Museum was one of the latest casualties, with all its displays having been taken away. Jim emphasized that those of us who administer historic sites need to devise strategies to make these places self-supporting. He pointed to the Landis Valley Museum as an example. The Museum has buildings and grounds that attract many visitors, but that doesn’t pay all of the expenses. Jim and his staff found ways to generate revenue while not “turning off” visitors. For example, the Museum is rented out for weddings and special events, which helps to pay the bills. Jim stressed that as the hosts of historic resources, we need to find creative ways to make those places help pay for themselves, while maintaining the integrity of the sites.

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Sojourners Stop at Morlatton Again



Sojourners enjoy their lunch outside the Mouns Jones House

It's a tradition the Schuylkill River Sojourners look forward to each year – lunch served at Morlatton Village by Trust member Martha Coyle and her helpers. This year was no exception. When the Sojourners arrived in their kayaks on June 5, the usual repast of pasta salad, fried chicken and water ice was accompanied as always by classical music and silver candlesticks. After many years of flawlessly organizing the meal for this stop on the Sojourn, Martha has decided it's time to "retire." Thank you, Martha, for making this the stop many Sojourners have said is their favorite.

Following lunch on the green outside the Mouns Jones House, Sojourners enjoyed a program on the National Water Trail System, presented by Edie Shean-Hammond, Superintendent at Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site. Then they resumed their journey on colorful kayaks heading toward Pottstown and eventually Philadelphia.