Musings on Murals
By RONAN DONOHOE

In our last newsletter Bill Owens shared the results of his investigations into the identity of the man on horseback depicted in the mural at the top of the Warner House main staircase. If you missed Bill’s article or wish to refresh your memory, it is available online at www.warnerhouse.org. Simply click on Publications and then select Late Fall Newsletter (2013).

Bill’s thorough examination of print sources, clues found within the mural itself, and circumstance led him to the conclusion that the painting is a depiction of William, Duke of Gloucester. As the only heir of Queen Anne to survive childhood, he was the Protestant hope for maintaining the Stuart line of succession – while he lived. When Anne died in 1714 without an heir (William died in 1711), the throne transferred into the House of Hanover.

I so enjoyed Bill’s article that I chose to try my hand at solving the puzzle surrounding the scene at the bottom of the stairs.

Let’s begin with a description of the painting in question by former Warner House Curator Joyce Volk:

The first scene is the most baffling. A woman in what appears to be a Dutch servant’s dress uses her

....... Continued on Page 6

Samuel Warner and a Flower Horn
By LOUISE RICHARDSON

Several years ago, while reading through the 1771 probate inventory of Jonathan Warner’s brother Samuel, I noticed a listing for a pair of flower horns, probably in the parlor, valued at three shillings sixpence. Often called cornucopias, the horns were usually made in England of earthenware or stoneware, and were flat on one side so that they might be hung on a wall. Although Samuel had several possessions that placed him in the upper income level, the flower horns, purely decorative objects, are rarely found in local inventories and did not appear in Jonathan’s probate-inventory in 1814. Were they brought to the house by Samuel’s widow’s children and therefore considered as her possessions, not Jonathan’s? While the museum has many 18th and early 19th century ceramics originally owned by the family, no flower horns are among them. What had happened to them?

Some time after the probate discovery, I was examining photos of the west sitting room during the later years of the family’s occupancy for evidence of furniture placement and had an "Aha" moment. In one picture of the west sitting room, there is an odd blotch on one side of the fireplace surround, which, upon close inspection, can be identified as a flower horn hung on the wood. Horns came in several sizes and types – some with simple molded flower decoration, others with female faces and elaborate rims. This seemed to be the latter, and the mottled surface suggested a pattern of colored oxides often used in mid eighteenth century earthenware. Archaeology at the house has uncovered several examples of tea wares decorated in this manner.

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Warner House Calendar 2014 Season

This year marks the 200th anniversary of Jonathan Warner's death in 1814, and the Warner House will celebrate Warner's life by honoring the bicentennial of his death with special talks, programs and exhibits. Join us as we pay our respects to the man Charles W. Breuer called one of the last of thecocked hats. Detailed descriptions of the events can be found on the website, and all events are at the Warner House unless otherwise noted.

MAY: Shop all month at the Fabulous Find in Kittery, Maine. All proceeds go to 3 local non-profits including the Warner House.
JUNE 1: Warner House opens for the season
JUNE 14: Market Square Day – Free Preview Tours of House, noon – 4 p.m.
JUNE 15: Father's Day – Open FREE to fathers all day!
JUNE 21: Costume Tea, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (See invitation in this newsletter).
JUNE 22: Members' Party, 4 p.m. - members free. Join our "Pier Support Group" as Buildings and Grounds Chair Kerry Vautrot leads tours from the basement to the cupola focusing on the sites that the LCHIP grant will address.
JULY 19: "Death of Jonathan Warner", Play/Reading, time TBA (check website), Part of The Last of the Cocked Hats lecture series.
JULY 31: "Memento Mori: The Art and Sentiment of Mourning Jewelry" by Laura Johnson, associate curator at Historic New England, 5:30 p.m. at Discover Portsmouth Center. Part of The Last of Cocked Hats lecture series.
AUG. 15: Twilight Tour, 5-8 p.m. Celebrate Jonathan Warner's Birthday, born in 1726.
AUG. 21: "Putting the Cocked Hat to Rest, the Rise of Industrialism in the Piscataqua Region" by Peter Michaud, National Register, Preservation Tax Incentives & Easements Coordinator, New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, 5:30 p.m. Part of The Last of Cocked Hats lecture series.
SEPT. 4: "Take the Portrait & Run" by James Smith, research assistant, Portsmouth Athenaeum, 5:30 p.m. at Warner House. Part of The Last Of The Cocked Hats lecture series.
SEPT. 21: The Magdrials in the Parlor, 4 p.m.
OCT. 8: "Expectations Dashed" by Sandra Rux, curator, Portsmouth Historical Society, 5:30 p.m. at Discover Portsmouth Center. Part of The Last Of The Cocked Hats lecture series.

Other events and programs this season include a curatorial tour, gravestone rubbing, special hardhat tours, church tour and the annual Patrons' Party. Please check in advance of program date. Visit the Calendar of Events on our website, www.warnerhouse.org, for any associated admission fees, updates and additions to our programs. While you are there, sign up for our e-newsletter to receive the latest news on the Warner House.

The Death of Jonathan Warner
200th anniversary

May 15, 1814 - May 15, 2014

Event logo design: James Smith

THE WARNER HOUSE Newsletter

Printed biannually on 100% post consumer recycled stock.

Editors:
Ronan Donohoe, Alan Haesche

Proofreading:
Alan Haesche, James Smith

Design:
Susan Kress Hamilton

Printing:
Phineas, Portsmouth, NH

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www.warnerhouse.org

Check out the new items in the gift shop!
Remember, members receive a 10% discount.

Sign up or renew your membership
online or by mail.
HOUSE STAFF for 2014 Season

NEW HOUSE MANAGER

Jeffrey Hopper brings energy and vision to the position of House Manager. A museum and conservation professional, with an MA in Museum Studies from Harvard University, Jeff is working with the Warner House Board to offer our members and friends a series of innovative programs. Jeff notes: “It is a pleasure to be working in a historic house of this caliber and I look forward to meeting our members and visitors this season.”

NEW TOUR GUIDE

Sharon L. Osofsky will be joining the Warner House as a tour guide this summer. A Master’s candidate in History at UNH Durham, Sharon also interns at the American Independence Museum in Exeter, where she has just curated an exhibition on the Society of the Cincinnati.

RETURNING TOUR GUIDE

Anne Rehner will continue to conduct tours and on occasion perform in costume the role of “Aunt Evie” aka Evelyn Sherburne (d. 1929), one of the last residents of the Warner House. Sandy Phelps, Melissa Walker and Robina Mitchell, our other talented tour guides, are returning again this year. All our guides also work as tour guides at other museums throughout the region.

CALLING ALL GREETERS!

This season we could use your help. We need Greeters for Monday, Thursday and Saturday, one for each of those days. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Jeff Hopper at 603 436-5909 or info@warnerhouse.org

A SPECIAL INVITATION TO A Costume Tea

Jonathan Warner extends an invitation to you and your friends for a special afternoon at the Macpheadres Warner House

We live in one of the finest early-Georgian brick houses in New England, c. 1716. I would not be too bold as to add that we are also among the best appointed in these northerly climes – our gardens are delightful, our murals powerful and our small chamber the envy of many. Declared a National Historic Landmark in 1960, we are well situated in downtown Portsmouth, near the mighty Piscataqua River (and rather close to Maine). Our house has been a bit quiet of late – might you and your friends be interested in a venue for costumed events such as teas or perhaps a dance?

Do join us in your costume of choice on Saturday, 21 June 2014 for an open house from 11:00-3:00. A five-dollar donation covers tea, cookies and a tour. RSVP to Jeff Hopper, Warner House Manager at 603-436-5909 or at info@warnerhouse.org by 15 June.
Not Bad for 300 Years Old!

By KERRY VAUTROT and Alan P. Haesche
Photos by Alan P. Haesche

This article is based on the presentation given by Kerry Vautrot, Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair at the Warner House annual meeting in January.

The Warner House itself is our largest, and most demanding collections object to maintain. It requires constant vigilance and care. Not only is the house a vessel for precious decorative arts, but it also provides a tangible way to communicate the story of those who lived inside. As an architectural gem and one of the earliest extant brick buildings in New England, the importance of the building extends beyond that of the Warner House Association. The building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and is considered to be a focal building within Portsmouth’s Historic District.

Fortunately, a line of dedicated stewards has long served the Warner House. Generations of devoted family maintained the building with pride until the Warner House Association acquired the property in 1932. Since then a team of ardent board members, staff and craftspeople have worked tirelessly to maintain the property.

An important part of active stewardship is conducting periodic assessments to take stock of the condition and identify the needs of the building. In the summer of 2013 we conducted an assessment to re-establish a baseline condition and generate a prioritized project list to guide future work on the house.

Prior to beginning an assessment of any historic building, it is important to have a plan and to have a team. Drawing from our talented board, the assessment was conducted by three executive board members: Kerry Vautrot, Elizabeth Farish and Peter Michaud, all experienced in historic structure evaluation.

Prior to the fieldwork, annotated floor plans and elevations, and checklists were prepared to ensure all elements were assessed—from chimney caps to bulkhead doors. On one rainy day in late August the team gathered to begin the survey. Armed with the tools of the trade: notepads, camera and headlamp the survey commenced. The goal of the assessment was to create a snapshot in time of the building condition, noting items such as cracks in walls, failed glazing in windows, or damaged brick. The team evaluated the building in wet and dry conditions to assist in identifying moisture-related issues. They looked for leaks, evaluated the gutters, downspouts and condition of the wood. This survey can be used as a baseline to evaluate how the house changes over time and will assist in determining if problems are active or if damage has stabilized.

The assessment confirmed that many of the primary building elements are in good condition: the majority of the exterior masonry is sound; the relatively new asphalt shingle roof is performing well and the balustrade (see picture below) is in good condition as are the foundation and the majority of the plaster on the first and second floors.

![Balustrade Image](image)

As one would expect in a house this age, the survey also identified degradation. We can see one of the three deteriorated parapet caps (above). These wooden caps are supposed to keep water from entering the porous brick, minimizing brick deterioration and the amount of moisture introduced to the building. There are several gaps in the siding around the windows in the cupola, which have given both moisture and squirrels the opportunity to enter the building. While the majority of the exterior masonry is in good condition, there is an active leak in the kitchen chimney and there are areas requiring repointing, removal of deteriorated mortar and its subsequent replacement, on the parapet walls (above) and at the base of the building.

![Parapet Wall Image](image)

On the interior the most extensive masonry deterioration is found in the basement where nine brick piers (see picture left) were added in the 19th century to support the beams above. The rising damp from the cement floor has caused extensive brick failure, which requires remediation.
In addition, the assessments identified several issues that appear to look far worse than they are, but are not threatening. Staining and loose or missing plaster on walls provides evidence of previous water damage in the attic. The assessment also noted flaking paint in the kitchen on the walls and ceiling and many cracks in the plaster walls and wood paneling. While these are not aesthetically pleasing, the root cause of the damage does not appear active. However, it is important to note these features, and document the condition so we can determine if cracks increase or if staining increases.

Following completion of the fieldwork, the needs were identified and projects prioritized. The highest priority needs involve the exterior envelope and the structural system or life safety concerns. Deficiencies within these systems can cause the greatest damage to the entire building. The chief challenge related to the exterior envelope is making it watertight.

Priorities are further informed by determining if elements or systems are in failure, will be in failure within the next five or ten years, or if the conditions need to be monitored. Aesthetic needs, like interior painting, take the lowest rank with respect to overall building condition. While they may be a priority for interpretive reasons, they pose no risk to the integrity of the building.

Tantamount to developing a project list is seeking potential funding sources. In our case as a non-profit, the Warner House Association looks to grants and matching donations.

Fortunately, Warner House was eligible to apply for the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) annual grant program. LCHIP uses Moose License Plate revenue to fund natural and cultural resource projects. In September, the Warner House Association applied for a grant and in January learned that we received the full amount of our request: $47,000. To accomplish the highest priority work and meet the LCHIP requirements, the Association must raise funds to match for a project total of $100,000.

The LCHIP project, which will be completed over the next two years, focuses on mitigating moisture and addressing structural needs. The main components of our project includes replacement of our failed and failing parapet caps, replacement of our failed or failing gutters and downspouts, window rehabilitation, wood trim repairs, door and frame repairs, select exterior repointing and brick pier stabilization.

**Prioritizing Needs**

- **EXTERIOR ENVELOPE, STRUCTURAL & MOISTURE MITIGATION ISSUES**
  - in Failure
  - Failure Imminent w/in 5-10 years
  - Issues to Monitor

- **AESTHETIC NEEDS & FINISHES**

- **ESTABLISHING PROJECT LIST & APPLYING FOR GRANTS**

The LCHIP project will be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Established by the National Park Service the primary tenets of these standards are to retain as much historic fabric as possible through repairing elements instead of replacing them, and if replacement is required, replacing in-kind. In-kind replacement means that we will be using the same materials, dimensions, colors and details.

Building upon the assessment, the Buildings and Grounds Committee will also be working to establish a cyclical maintenance and monitoring plan that prompts the Committee to monitor cracks and keep up with general maintenance, like painting windows, on a regular schedule. The LCHIP project is a fabulous gift, but maintenance on a historic building, or any building for that matter is a continual effort. To help support those needs, we will need to continue to fundraise to support the Larry Kent Fund for Building Maintenance.

Maintaining our National Historic Landmark is essential to ensuring that the Warner House lasts another 300 years. The LCHIP project and building assessment have positioned Warner House for a bright future.

Demonstrating a generous spirit and love for the Warner House, an anonymous donor has pledged a $25,000 match to the LCHIP matching grant. The Warner House is half way to matching the LCHIP grant— we must now raise $25,000 first to match our anonymous donor, with your support! Go to www.warnerhouse.org to donate to the LCHIP project to give by credit card or make checks payable to the Warner House Association, memo line LCHIP GRANT, and mail to P.O. Box 895, Portsmouth, NH, 03802-0895.
her hands to stop her Dutch, or possibly, English flax wheel. An agitated black-and-white terrier watches as an eagle takes flight with a chicken. Figures in this vignette are badly proportioned in relation to one another; the woman is quite small, and the dog and eagle are huge. This fact alone rules out a print as the source for the scene. It must have had some special meaning for Macpheadris, as he would have had control of the subject matter, but the choice remains a puzzle.

Joyce Geary Volk

I started as so many of us do these days – with a Google search. Whatever its faults, it does in seconds what used to take days or weeks in the library. I typed in “eagle clutching bird in talons” and was immediately presented with a reference to the dream of Penelope, the faithful wife left behind at home for many years by her husband Odysseus in Homer’s Odyssey. As Penelope describes the dream to her husband, disguised as a soothsayer:

But please, read this dream for me, won’t you? Listen closely…

I keep twenty geese in the house, from the water trough. They come and peck their wheat – I love to watch them all. But down from a mountain swooped this great hook-beaked eagle.

Yes, and he snapped their necks and killed them one and all and they lay in heaps throughout the halls while he, back to the clear blue sky he soared at once.

But I wept and wailed – only a dream, of course – and our well-groomed ladies came and clustered round me, sobbing and stricken: the eagle killed my geese. But down he swooped again and settling onto a jutting rafter called out in a human voice that dried my tears, “Courage, daughter of famous King Icarius! This is no dream but a happy waking vision, real as day, that will come true for you. The geese were your suitors – I was once the eagle. But now I am your husband, back again at last, About to launch a terrible fate against them all!”

So he vowed, and the soothing sleep released me. I peered around and saw my geese in the house, pecking at their wheat, at the same trough where they always took their meal.


What then suggests a connection between Sarah Macpheadris and Penelope? Long absences at the outset of a marriage? To the best of our knowledge, Archibald Macpheadris was forty at the time of his marriage to fifteen year-old Sarah Wentworth in 1717. His business interests often required him to be away for long periods of time; Spain, Ireland and the West Indies. Macpheadris was an agent of these long-absences, planning entire seasons in other harbors:

August 28, 1718, Letter from Archibald Macpheadris to Robert Wilson (in Belfast):

“Sailing under my convoy in the great ship with four other vessels…and comes with them myself to winter with you from Cadiz, where I hope you will be pleased to favor me with a line.”

A connection between Penelope and Sarah grows more compelling when one takes into account a later communication suggesting that Macpheadris was away for periods so long that his family came to believe him dead:

September 2, 1719, Letter from Lewen & Taylor (in Lisbon, Portugal) to Archibald Macpheadris (probably in Ireland or England):

“News from Seneca: Snow. Forty-seven days from Piscataqua with [news] that you had died in Cadiz 7 March last and your spouse and relations are in mourning for you.”

Could this be then a work commissioned as a reminder from an oft-absent husband to a young and lonely wife left behind at home? I shall return.

A final link between Penelope and Sarah might be suggested in the activity depicted in the mural. The woman with the spinning wheel could well be a reference to Penelope at her weaving, which she worked at every day and pulled out each night to start over again the so as to keep her suitors away while waiting in hope for her husband’s return. Was a woman at a spinning wheel simply a more familiar scene...
Musings on Murals...... continued from Page 6

than a woman at a loom? Might Sarah have occupied her
time spinning rather than weaving?

Shifting from fair to fowl, is the bird in the mural a goose?
It appears to be more like a dove or a chicken. Relative to
the massive eagle, however, it would be an awfully large dove,
making a goose seem more plausible. One should also take into
account the inconsistency of translation. Different versions
vary greatly over time. Could the muralist have been familiar
with a translation in which the species is less certain or less specific?

I do not present these arguments as exhaustive and careful
research. I wish only to provide a possible explanation in
the hope that it may encourage others to undertake their
own investigations. I promise that you will learn quite a lot
about the fascinating history of our house and its families
along the way.

Samuel Warner and a Flower Horn...... continued from Page 1

The chance of acquiring an example for the house seemed
unlikely, as they are rare and expensive. Last year, however,
the collection of Harry Root, a noted collector from
Chicago, was consigned to Skinners auction house in
Boston, and, among his pieces, was a similar horn. Pairs of
horns are not identical twins; the bottoms curve in opposite
directions, and the Root example was the equal of the
missing mate to the horn shown in the house photo. The
curatorial committee was able to purchase it at an attrac-
tively low price. Harry had a long association with the Art
Institute of Chicago and had bequeathed several objects to
them. He would have been delighted to know that his
cornucopia had found a new home at the Warner House
where it will be displayed in the west sitting room.

THE WARNER HOUSE ASSOCIATION • 150 DANIEL STREET, P.O. BOX 895, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03802-0895

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We wish to thank PISCATAQUA SAVINGS BANK who sponsored this issue of the newsletter.

HOURS: Open June through October. Daily except Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.