300th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARNER HOUSE
By JAMES SMITH

THIS SEASON the Warner House celebrates its 300th anniversary. Begun in 1716, the Warner House was built for Capt. Archibald Macphadriss, a Scots-Irish merchant, land speculator and investor in the first New Hampshire ironworks. Some may recall that Macphadriss is also responsible for bringing the first lion to America in 1715.

The celebration of our 300th year began late last summer with the unveiling of our birthday logo at right, designed as a gift to the Warner House by former board member Susan Kress Hamilton.

In February at the Portsmouth Historic Sites popular Winter Symposium, Life and Death on the Piscataqua, Sandra Rux, Chair, and Jeff Hopper, House Manager, presented an illustrated lecture titled “Revealing the Warner House,” focusing on the findings of new research undertaken in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Warner House.

On June 1, when the house opens for the season, each of the furnished period rooms will include table settings appropriate to the period of the room and a vignette reflecting the dining tastes of the family at that time.

From June through August, a Warner House 300th Celebration exhibit will be on display at the Discover Portsmouth Center. The exhibit will celebrate the Warner House as a true work of art—both art from within its collections and the Warner House as a subject that inspires art. Also in June, the Warner House welcomes back the Warner family descendants, former employees and former board members of the Warner House for a special afternoon on June 25. The following day, the Warner House invites the public to our version of "Old Home Day" with the oldest brick house in Portsmouth! On Aug. 6, the Warner House will honor Macphadriss heritage with a Celtic festival featuring traditional music. In September, the Warner House will hold a gala to send the Warner House into its next 300 years of stewardship.

The 300th committee has been meeting monthly for some time. Members include Bob Barth, Pat Caron, Bob Chase, Ronan Donohoe, Barbara Englebach, Elizabeth Farish, Susan Kress Hamilton, Deb Richards, Louise Richardson, Sandra Rux, Carol Seely, James Smith (chair) and Melissa Walker.

For these events, the Warner House needs your support whether it is by volunteering, participating or donating. For more information, please contact the Warner House at 603-436-5909 or e-mail info@warnerhouse.org. For the latest on events at the Warner House subscribe to our e-blasts by visiting www.warnerhouse.org

A Gift to our Collection

Hollis Brodrick recently donated this lovely press-molded salt-glazed stoneware sauceboat that matches shards found at the Warner House during archaeological explorations in the 1990s. Thank you Hollis.
LETTER FROM
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
CHAIRPERSON

WELCOME TO THE FIRST newsletter of our 300th anniversary year. Exciting events and exhibits are planned throughout the year by each of our committees.

I will take a few sentences to review 2015. Visitation increased, particularly in the first part of the season. Jeff Hopper and intern Angela Costello transformed the former guest bedroom into an exhibit of architectural fragments and Jeff developed the “Architectural Secrets” tour. The Costume Tea was moved to Market Square Day and the Downton Abbey Tea met with great success in August. Applefest included fresh cider pressed by King Tut cider mill from donated apples picked by members and friends, a bake sale, raffle and music by Todd Seely. Our first ever “Holiday in December” program featured toys usually stored in the attic, a great tree donated by Melissa Walker and carolers coordinated by Carol Seely. If you missed it in 2015, plan to attend in 2016.

James Smith is chairing the 300th Anniversary Committee that is planning events such as an old home weekend for descendants, a Celtic Festival and a Gala Party.

Buildings and Grounds have planted hundreds of tulips at the front of the Warner House to greet our opening in June. Our curatorial committee is planning “300 Years of Dining at the Warner House” using archaeology and inventories to show place settings covering 300 years. Furnishings and ceramics changed and so did the food and mode of dining.

Bob Chase and Richard Candee are curating an exhibit for the Discover Portsmouth Center celebrating the history of the Warner House. Richard Candee and Joyce Volk have written an article that will appear in Art and Antiques Magazine in the spring that discusses the changes in the Warner House in the past twenty years and Richard Candee has written for the Art Guide about representations of the Warner House by New England artists.

Volunteers are needed to help with Warner House 300th events. If you are interested please contact James Smith or email info@warnerhouse.org.

Sandra Rux, Chair
Three Centuries of Dining in the Warner House

Our curatorial committee is planning an exciting new exhibit at the Warner House in honor of the 300th anniversary of the house that will open on June 1st with a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Featuring vignettes from the Macpheadris years through the summer occupancy of Eveline Sherburne and her nephew Thomas Penhallow, it allows us to tell the stories of the Warner House in a fresh way.

The parlor will showcase four periods of dining—Macpheadris, Warner, John Nathaniel Sherburne and Aunt Evie. The setting room or small parlor will be the scene of business entertaining for Jonathan Warner while the inner kitchen will show how the enslaved Africans and servants may have eaten in the 1760s.

Upstairs, the small chamber in the hallway is being converted to a study for Archibald Macpheadris, again highlighting business entertaining. In the small chamber a table is set for breakfast tea for Elizabeth Pitts and Jonathan Warner.

The Penhallow bedchamber will show setting-up week for Betsy Penhallow after the birth of her first child Thomas (setting-up week normally took place four weeks after the birth and allowed relatives and friends to greet the new child and enjoy cake and wine). The Whipple bedroom will depict supper for the Whipple toddlers.

Table set for Archibald Macpheadris to enjoy a glass of Madeira with Irish cheeses sent to him as a wedding present. Photo: Alan Haesche.

We are working with letters, inventories, archaeological evidence and newspaper advertisements to develop place settings of ceramics, glassware and flatware with menus to accompany each scene. So far, this has been an interesting process to pull together research done over past decades into a representation that will attract many people—food is something we all relate to and this exhibition uses food to relate to ceramics, furniture and life experiences over the three hundred years of the Warner House.

At the Warner House Applefest, October 10, 2015, participants made cider the old fashioned way and learned how to dry apples. Shown at right, the apple conveyor loading the cider press. Above, Todd Seely playing and singing and left, dancing at the Fest.
Window Sash Weights

By JEFF HOPPER

In anticipation of the tercentennial and attempting to better understand the original structure and changes that have occurred to and in the Warner House, Sandra Rux and I began to re-read John Drew’s bill to Archibald Macphedriss to see if any new information could be gleaned. One of the intriguing entries referred to the “casting 700 of sash leads.” (Drew).

At first glance it seemed odd that sash leads were cast for what appears to be wooden sash windows. Sash leads with this inference seemed to mean that the windows were composed of glass panes set in lead grooved lead frames. On reflection this seemed unlikely given other parts of the same bill referencing construction of wooden sashes and the style of the house looking stylistically forward rather than backward. On a further reading and adjusting the modern ear for early 18th century short descriptions, we began to investigate the idea of sash leads referring to sash weights.

 Luckily there was a loose weight in one of the side windows. When this was extracted from the window side pocket a long lead square shaped weight came out of the pocket. It had a modern cord, so at some time within the last century it was used as a counter balance for the window. We then looked at the front windows that had been conserved a number of years ago and the side pockets had been left open. When the windows were lifted and the weights descended, similar square weights descended in the pockets. Going back to the bill, Drew charged Macphedris for 42 sash frames.

The Warner House has only lower sash operable windows, so we based our simple calculations on that number. To account for the weights or leads the number was doubled (84) to provide counterbalanced weight. We now assumed that the 700 referred to a weight of lead rather than a number. In Drew’s bill there appears to be a floating dot between “700” and “of,” so there may have been a pause and “lbs.” were never inserted, or it may simply have been understood. Regardless, when 700 was divided by 84 the result was 8.333 lbs., which was very close to the weight of the loose sash lead. Variances needed to be taken into consideration to accommodate the assumed disparities between the sash sizes and weight requirements.

While conserving a window in the Whipple bedchamber, this relationship was confirmed. The size of the window determines the weight of the lead. This window is smaller than others and the two sash weights discovered are two inches shorter and correspondingly lighter. This was exciting news.

Sandra and I started to get the word out, sharing it with colleagues. Barbara Ward, Director/ Curator of the Moffatt Ladd House, passed the excitement on to James Garvin, the former State of New Hampshire Architectural Historian. It just so happened that he was ready to submit an article on sash weights for the Historic New England Magazine.” Eager to include the find at Warner House in his article, James borrowed the weights to be photographed. (Garvin 32-33)

So why is there interest and excitement over sash leads? Well, the Warner House sash leads are currently the oldest in New England. Their rediscovery pushed the known date back from 1740 to 1716. (Garvin) As early as 1701, Thomas Banister recorded that full sets of sashes were being sold in Boston. However, these were con-

A few versions of sash weights found in Warner House. Ropes are replacements not the original used. Photo: Alan Haesche
constructed in England and imported. Banister noted in a letter to a friend that the New England craftsmen were unfamiliar with their construction. (Montgomery 169) By 1713 the rebuilt Boston State House had operating sash windows that were noted at the opening of the building. (Halsey 713-4) Drew during his time and work in Deptford, UK billed clients for sash windows. So he either subcontracted a sash maker, or he knew how to make them to London specifications. (Drew/Montgomery, 41). In 1716-18, Drew bills Macpheadris for sashes, so again either he had someone make them here or did so himself. Either scenario establishes that by 1713 in Boston and by 1716 in Portsmouth the skill for making operable sash windows, an important technological advance in building construction, was occurring on these shores.

To give a sense of the skill of this accomplishment, as late as 1770 Thomas Jefferson was ordering completed sashes with extra glass from London for his new home, the first Monticello. (Mooney, 38) According to British experts, the use of operable weighted sash windows began in the mid-1660s in London; the 1690s saw the development of the sash window, as we know it. By the 1720s it became the dominant new window technology of the British-Atlantic world. So what appears to be a simple block of lead is actually part of a technological building change that helped to create the Anglo-American Georgian house and a stylistic form that we often take for granted as a natural outcome of design history. (Louw, 307)

Notes
Drew, John, Bill to Capt. Archibald Macpheadris 1716-1718, in the collection of the Warner House Association

Drew, John and Montgomery, Hugh, Drew/Montgomery Account Book c.1706- c.1809, Microfilm Portsmouth Athenaeum, (plate 41)

Farmer, Ben and Kuw, Hentie (eds.) The advantage of a clearer light: the sash-window as a harbinger of an age of progress and enlightenment, Companion to Contemporary Architectural Thought, Routledge, London and New York; 1993 (pp. 300-308)

Garvin, James. Pulleys, Weights, and Window Sashes, Historic New England Magazine, Vol.16, No. 2, Fall 2015, Boston; (pp.32-33)


Mooney, Barbara Burlison, Prodigy Houses of Virginia, Architecture and the Native Elite, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville & London, 2008: (p. 38)

Halsey, Thomas, M. (ed.), Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 1973; (pp. 713-714)
Windows Return to Warner House

By KERRY A. VAUTROT

This year, Jade Mortimer and her team from Heartwood Window Restoration restored twenty-four of the Warner House’s forty-nine windows. The twenty-four windows, which included the sash in the worst condition, were comprised of windows from the north (garden-side) elevation, summer kitchen, cellar, attic and in the cupola. The work, part of the LCHIP grant project, will ensure the windows continue to serve the Warner House for many years to come.

Windows were removed and reinstalled in phases beginning in June 2015 with the final major reinstallation taking place at the very end of December. The goal of the restoration project was to maintain as much historic fabric as possible. Painstaking attention to detail during the restoration included gluing broken pieces of historic, wavy glass together and making custom knives needed to replicate muntin profiles.

Historic wooden windows are character defining features of buildings and are often indicators of architectural style. Routine repair should be considered a key component of house maintenance. If you are considering repairing or replacing your own wooden windows, please look to the following resources for guidance: The National Park Service’s Preservation Briefs 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows (http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/9-wood- en-windows.htm) and the New England Window Restoration Alliance (http://www.windowrestorationne.org/).

In addition, next spring the Warner House will be hosting a workshop in conjunction with Heartwood Window Restoration on how to install weatherstripping on your historic wooden windows to make them more energy efficient.

Perhaps the most iconic window at Warner House, the arched window in the stair hall, was restored as part of the work.

Photo: Kerry Vautrot
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Gravestone Artwear
P.O. Box 141, York Harbor, ME 03911

OTHER EVENTS
Dates to be Announced

ARCHITECTURAL SECRETS TOUR
Mondays or by appointment at 10 am, dates TBA

GALLERY TALKS for "Dining at the Warner House"
at least 3 dates TBA

CHATS WITH THE CURATOR
monthly dates TBA

TALKS/WALKS for Discover Portsmouth
Warner House Exhibit - dates TBA

*See www.WarnerHouse.com website for further details on these events.

During the holidays in December 2015, highlights included a visit by the extended family of Louise Crane shown above and Melissa Walker's decorated Christmas tree.

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

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HOURS: Open June 1st through Mid-October. Daily except Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.