



# Old Morlatton Village MESSENGER

*The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County*

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## A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

### **Development of Historic Morlatton**

By Phoebe Hopkins

The Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County was founded in 1964 to preserve and maintain significant historic sites and structures in Berks County. Since 1965 it has focused on preservation and maintenance of some of the County's architectural gems, the Keim, DeTurk, and Hottenstein houses, and on acquiring and restoring eighteenth century buildings at the County's first settlement site along the Schuylkill River, Morlatton Village. Although restoration is far from complete, it is time to take on a new mission at Morlatton—to make the place known, make it accessible and to put it on the map. (It is not currently noted on any Berks County map.)

By the end of summer, the Thun Trail will be open, connecting Pottstown to Reading, with a Trail Head at Morlatton. People will come and we must be ready to welcome them. The Trust has formed a committee to further the development of Historic Morlatton as an historic site and to strengthen its ties to the surrounding region and the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. The *Morlatton Village Development Program* by Robert E. Bartmann, Preservation Planner, and the *Proposal for Historic Morlatton* by Jim Lewars, Administrator of Daniel Boone Homestead, offer extensive guidelines.

### **Morlatton Village Development Plan**

By Robert E. Bartmann

It is proposed that lands along the Schuylkill River at Douglassville be a passive recreation area and part of Amity Township's Park and Recreation system. Within the boundaries of this park would be historic Morlatton Village. Morlatton Village would be owned and operated as a museum by the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, a nonprofit organization. The Trust would be responsible for the museum buildings and their environs important to depicting the historic landscape. The Township would be responsible for the surrounding natural area, nature trails, picnic facilities, and water related recreation facilities. There could be shared use of some areas and facilities. Fields, woodlands, and meadows could be maintained as part of the historic environment but used for romping, Frisbee toss, picnicking, and other informal recreation.

### **Proposal for Historic Morlatton**

By James Lewars

Historic Morlatton has the potential for more intense and regular public use and interpretation. Historic Morlatton should be seen as a museum complex and future use and development should be directed by this reality.

Any future development of Morlatton should take into account the limited resources of the Trust. While there is room for growth, the Trust must recognize the limited nature of present resources and the various pressures for the Trust's resources (i.e. the preservation of all of the buildings and holdings). One must also recognize that Morlatton will not become an attraction which draws tens of thousands of visitors.

Dedicated to maintaining and preserving historically and architecturally significant properties

The realistic visitation will include local people using the site for educational and recreational purposes, visitors from outside the area who will learn about the site through cooperative arrangements with other historic sites (Hopewell Furnace, Daniel Boone Homestead, Pottsgrove Manor, other members of the Berks County Museum Council and the Rural History Confederation), and people using the White Horse Inn for functions.

The Trust has the very real potential to develop Morlatton into a site which interprets various historic and environmental themes, allow for self-guiding, allow for opening structures and offering programs (such as tours, exhibits, living history programs, school programs) as staffing permits, and doing all of this without tremendous outlay or major capitol expense. While the Trust can position itself for more sophisticated development at Morlatton should the opportunity come about, the organization must not undertake more than can reasonably be accomplished with the present staffing and budget.

In order to develop Morlatton into a museum, various important tasks need to be accomplished. Some of these tasks are “bricks and mortar”, but some are organizational, research oriented, professional, and educational.

Of the latter organizational oriented tasks the following are important: the Trust must continue to compile and organize primary and secondary research on the entire complex; the Trust must complete an interpretive plan for the complex which does not need to be a six inch thick thesis, however, it must address what themes will be interpreted throughout the complex and how each of the structures will be interpreted. As an example, the Trust may decide to interpret the Mouns Jones House to the period 1725. If that is the case then the building should be furnished to that specific period and the activities which occur in the building should specifically deal with that period. This process will guide the museum’s exhibits and education programs.

The Trust needs to establish a concise list of goals and objectives to guide the management of the museum. The Trust will need to bring on a professional director to guide this list of goals and the various committees. Board members who serve on the committees need to understand that committees must report to the director when they are serving in the role of a committee person. The Trust needs a strong director who will

implement the goals agreed upon by the board.

The Trust needs to map out a plan for restoration/preservation of the buildings at Morlatton and list the future work in priority. Finally, the Trust needs to budget the operation over five years and identify potential sources of grant and other income.

### **LOOK FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT**

Your annual dues reminder notice will look a little different. Please take the time to read about the various volunteer opportunities that are offered and indicate on the form you receive where you might be able to help.

### **COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

The Board of Directors governs the Historic Preservation Trust through a committee structure in which committee undertake the various tasks necessary for the operation of the Trust. Each committee is charged with specific responsibilities. Each board member is assigned to one or more committees. A board member is appointed chairman and is in charge of running his/her committee. Members of the Preservation Trust and other interested people are encouraged to join. Contact the Board President, Committee Chairman or office for more information.

**Morlatton Committee** is charged with overseeing the development of the Morlatton Village in accordance with the Morlatton Development Plan in conjunction with Amity Township and other community volunteers and organizations.

**Hottenstein House Committee** oversees the care and preservation of the Hottenstein House and interfaces with the curator of the Hottenstein House, Robert Reynolds, on maintenance and preservation issues concerning the house.

**Keim-DeTurck Properties Committee** watches over these properties on a periodic basis, brings maintenance and preservation issues to the attention of the Property Committee, and organizes community outreach and involvement with respect to these properties.

**Property Committee** is charged with the physical restoration/preservation and maintenance of the Trust's 18th century properties. The committee inspects, reports and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. Maintenance tasks are undertaken by committee members. The committee also oversees restoration/preservation projects. They research architectural styles and techniques, prioritize projects, recommend a timeline and budget for projects. They organize work days and show the buildings when requested.

**Finance Committee** oversees the Trust's fiscal operations, including periodic review of its financial condition and budgeting, and the organization's investments. They make recommendations to the Board of Directors.

**Financial/Community Outreach Committee** is in charge of fund raising, grant applications and soliciting funds from the community.

**Planning and Strategy Committee** is charged with establishing and updating the Trust's strategic plan which sets forth both short term and long term strategies to achieve the Trust's mission. This includes establishing goals and objectives and stating strategies to achieve them. The committee periodically reviews and updates the strategies plan to address developments.

**Administration Committee** oversees administrative duties including answering the phone, basic correspondence, organizing mailings, paying bills, filing, and taking care of other office matters.

**Country Fair Committee** organizes all aspects of the Country Fair. This includes publicity, attracting and working with craft vendors and exhibitors, parking, baked goods, working with Living Historians and other attractions, arranging the gourmet luncheon, organizing volunteers, landscaping, and making arrangements for docents, decorations and the Trust's display tent.

**Christmas Tea Committee** selects the tea site, makes arrangements with the property owner, arranges for donations of cookies and baked goods, crafts, has work parties to make jams and jellies and sandwiches, organizes the mailings of the invitations and tickets, decorates the home and arranges for parking.

**Publicity** includes writing press releases to advertise programs and special events, taking pictures of restoration/preservation work, appearing on television and radio shows, building relationships and keeping media sources informed about special events.

**Advertising** involves identifying and building relationships with sponsors for special events and programs, approaching businesses to be sponsors, designing brochures and flyers to publicize programs and events, contacting media for advertising deadlines and costs.

**Fund Raising** encompasses meeting with individuals to gain support for the organization, researching and writing grants, writing letters asking for support, and organizing and holding special events.

**Newsletter** needs help in three areas: writing articles, taking photographs and preparing the mailing.

**Maintenance- buildings** involves painting, carpentry, plumbing and electrical work, tasks identified by the property committee, work days at each property.

**Maintenance-grounds** includes grass mowing, weed whacking, tree trimming, researching and replacing plants with appropriate period species.

**Living Historians** are looking for people interested in learning 18th century domestic skills to teach and educate the public about colonial life.

**Docents** give tours and show properties to interested individuals and groups. They tell about the history and heritage, point out architectural features and interesting events. Promote the organization.

**Special Events** makes all arrangements, plan and execute all tasks relating to the event.



Belated but very sincere birthday wishes to Lillian Walter who turned 95 on November 20, 2005. Lillian has been a loyal member and volunteer for many years and can always be seen behind the membership table at the Fair and Tea. Her pep and enthusiasm inspire us all.

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**CHRISTMAS TEA 2005**



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