



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

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Volume 32 Number 9 Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or to pmrhorton@aol.com October 2009

With all that has been going on with the 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse and the attendant deep involvement of your editor Phyllis Horton, we have given her the month off from preparing an article for this noble journal. In its stead, as I would like to do occasionally in the future, we are running one of Nancy Reid's excellent series of articles that she wrote when she was the editor. These are bits of priceless local history that well deserve another airing.

Pete Howes

## *The Streets of Our Town*

An interesting way of learning about any town is to study the names of its streets, for often they reflect events and people who have been a part of the town's history. So it is with Dennis—and here's a first instance for you—Shiverick Street in East Dennis commemorates the name of a ship building family who once built giant clipper ships in tiny Sesuit Harbor. Other streets in Dennis and East Dennis bear the names of some of these queens of the seas—Hippogriffe, Wild Hunter, Christopher Hall—these ships ranked with the finest ever built and sailed around the world many times, captained by men who grew up within sight of the shipyard where they were fashioned. On the west side of Sesuit harbor there is a boulder marking for posterity the incredible industry that flourished in East Dennis from 1849 to 1863. Other clippers built in the Shivericks were the famous Belle of the West, Revenue, Kit Carson, Webfoot, and The Ellen Sears. If you want to know more of this romantic era, read They Built Clipper Ships in Their Backyard by Admont G. Clark. The book is available at Parnassus Bookstore.

As you tour Dennis this summer with your guests, visit Sesuit Harbor and read the plaque on the Shiverick Boulder—and look for Shiverick, Wild Hunter, Hippogriffe, and Christopher Hall—some of the Historic streets of our town.

Nancy Thacher Reid  
June 1978 Newsletter

## *Manse Junior Docent Program*

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful group of Junior Docents both learning the History of the Manse and Dennis and helping with our summer visitors. On Tuesday September 15 before the Dennis selectmen's meeting, Nancy Howes, chairman of the 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse Museum, presented nine girls with certificates of appreciation who had served as junior docents for the past summer. The girls, dressed in the colonial costumes they wear at the Manse, were thanked for all the help they gave helping to guide visitors through the upstairs rooms. Our guests were delighted to see the girls learning to spin and weave wool, knit and sew and telling them how people lived in the 1700's. Standing, from left, Docent Terri Fox, Dylan Krusz, Ariana Rogers, Carly Belanger, Jessica Benoit, Nellie Stidham, Manse Chairwoman Nancy Howes. Front, left to right, Jacqueline May, Annalee May, Miriam May, Bridie Eckle.



Richard Howes

Manse Chairwoman Nancy Howes. Front, left to right, Jacqueline May, Annalee May, Miriam May, Bridie Eckle.

Nancy Howes

## Manse Repair & Preservation

In the May Newsletter I promised to keep you updated on the progress of this important project, and there has been major progress during the last few months. Before I delve into the details, if you are a Dennis resident, *PLEASE* go to the Special Town Meeting on October 27<sup>th</sup> and vote ‘YES’ for the Community Preservation article funding the repairs. Remember, a ‘yes’ vote will *not* raise your taxes!

In June, the Town of Dennis won a \$50,000 grant for the Manse effort from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund. These funds, together with the \$200,000 approved at the 2008 Town Meeting will fund the structural repairs and stabilization of the original deteriorated heavy timbers and framing, repairs to and repointing of the central chimney and the selective rebuilding of severely deteriorated brick masonry. These repairs are configured to be a self-contained program should the rest of the funds not be approved this fall, or to blend seamlessly with the full program. We expect that the Grant Contract with the State will be signed sometime in October.

After the full design and extensive drawings were completed and the specifications prepared, they were submitted to and approved by the MA Historical Commission (MHC). Due to the Preservation Restriction entered into with the Town of Dennis years ago, they have to approve all major modifications. As I mentioned in the last article, the continued communications between MHC and our architects, Newport Collaborative Architects, Inc., allowed their approval with no changes, modifications or restrictions. The town of Dennis followed this approval with the release of an invitation to bid to the MA Central Register and local newspapers that was published on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.



This picture shows some of the twenty-three people who arrived for the bidder's briefing at the Manse on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. Both prime contractors and sub-contractors were in attendance. The bidding, however, is restricted to firms that are in the business of repairing and restoring historical structures, and the contractor selected by the Town has to be approved by the MA Historical Commission. The bid package contains numerous regulations, from the required State and Town procurement regulations required of all municipal bids to the

Secretary of Interiors Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties. These are the benefits (or restrictions, if you prefer) of contracting to work on a building that is listed on the National Historic Register and the State Register of Historic Places.

There are many other efforts in progress to make this program a success, of course. In order to start work, Ye Olde Manse must be completely emptied!! The preparation for this huge task is extensive.

A great debt of gratitude goes to archivist Phyllis Horton, assisted by Dawn Dellner, whom have spent four days a week for I don't know how many months carefully cataloging and preparing the detailed records of every of the nearly 3,000 items (to date) in the Manse! And as you would surmise, there have been a few “wonderful finds” (and some not so wonderful ones!) tucked away into the many closets, cupboards, shelves, nooks and crannies of the old building.

Nancy Howes, Chairman of the Manse Committee, has several sub-committees that are planning for the cleaning, restoration, repairs and storage of the dresses, costumes, curtains, quilts, rugs etc. that need to be accomplished. Some items will be in the custody of Manse Members during the period that the Manse is closed so that key events, such as the School Program, can continue.

Mary Raycraft is leading the team to move plants from behind the Manse before the construction starts – and eventually design where their new home will be when the project is completed.

The Dennis Historical Society has signed an agreement – renewable yearly – with the West Dennis Library to house the DHS library collection, and is paying for the installation of new shelving and secure storage. Burt Derrick, the DHS Librarian, has the task of inventorying and packing up the library for this move to its new home.

In addition to all of these activities, there are many others involved in making this program a success, and much credit goes to the Administration of the Town of Dennis for fully supporting our activities.

Where are we in terms of the project schedule? The Repair & Preservation bids are due on October 8<sup>th</sup>, with the contractor selection soon afterwards. The “Emptying of the Manse” to the West Dennis Library, the West Dennis Graded School, the schoolhouse on the Manse property, to various individual homes, and to climate-controlled storage will occur before the end of October. The items that are being moved to the West Dennis Graded School will be for continuing display.

If all of these plans move on as anticipated, construction on this project will start in early November that was started in early 2006, with completion in the spring of 20110.

Pete Howes  
Chairman, Repair Committe

### *The Mystery of the Whatisit*



The *whatisit* has a moveable shelf at the bottom that has 2 pulleys at each end of the shelf, with matching pulleys at the top of each side. The windless at the top has holes in it so that short poles can be inserted to wind the bottom up to compress what ever was being compressed.

Does anybody have any ideas WHAT IS IT??

Dick Howes

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## Mark Your Calendars – Upcoming DHS Programs

Three things you can't recover:

The word.....after it's said.  
The occasion.....after it's missed.  
The time.....after it's gone

Dear DHS Members,

The “*word*” has not yet been said about October 17, 2009.

The “*occasion*” is our Annual Meeting and Luncheon – a not to be missed event.

The “*time*” is 11:30 a.m. at SeaView Restaurant, and it’s not too late to send in your reservation.

If you’ve misplaced your reservation slip, call June at: (508) 385-9308 before October 12, 2009. Hope to see many of you there.

June Howes  
DHS Programs

### *Notable Words From A Past President*

*“....When we accept membership in the Dennis Historical Society, we also assume a responsibility to participate now and ever more in the preservation of our rich heritage. So many have contributed over time to the town’s historic treasures. And for these efforts, we today are thankful. Still, so many more must come forward. Preservation is a willing challenge we cannot turn aside.”*

Raymond M. Urquhart  
DHS Newsletter  
October, 2003