

Old House Tell Wonderful Stories and 8th Annual Historic House Tour on September 22 Will Not Disappoint

The 8th Annual Historic House Tour on Saturday September 22 will take you behind the scenes as the doors of nine historic properties in Tredyffrin and Easttown Townships are opened to visitors. Discover the rich architectural heritage of the area as you explore private residences, two barns and a historic church. The featured properties span 18th, 19th and 20th centuries and visitors are invited inside for a glimpse of what it is like to live, work, and worship in these unique historic structures.

“We are excited about the 2012 Historic House Tour,” commented Pattye Benson, President of Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust and Chair of the House Tour. “Our annual house tour involves the community first-hand for a historic and architectural experience. With the cooperation of generous homeowners and many volunteers, you can experience the buildings that make this area distinctive and beautiful. Visitors will see the community from a different perspective as we open the doors to our past, present, and future. The house tour has become one of the Trust’s most anticipated annual events. If you love history and architecture, you will not want to miss this year’s tour.”

The Duportail House, circa 1740 farmhouse in Chesterbrook, will be the featured ticket pick-up point for the 2012 House Tour. General Louis Lebeque Duportail, chief engineer of the Continental Army, used Duportail House as his quarters during the Valley Forge encampment of the Revolutionary War. Due to a recent restoration project, the Federal Barn on the Duportail property will be open for house tour visitors. The Federal Barn also referred to as the ‘Signature Barn’ dates to 1792 and is purported to be the oldest signed bank barn in Pennsylvania. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Visitors will enjoy a stop at the historic 19th century Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and Cemetery in Devon. According to the church historian, Bertha Jackmon, the church is the “oldest continuous African-American congregation of any denomination on the entire Main Line.” On the Mt. Zion AME Cemetery grounds, the Civil War soldier re-enactors of the 22nd US Colored Infantry (USCI) from Asbury Park, NJ will provide an historic presentation and demonstration on the loading and firing of their rifles, and will shoot two volleys during each 30-minute staging, 1:30 PM, 2:10 PM, 2:50 PM and 3:30 PM. The Cemetery portion of the Mt. Zion AME Church’s participation on the house tour is free and open to the public. Jackmon commented, “Come, see, meet the soldiers and learn about the tremendous and very significant contributions colored soldiers made during and after the Civil War.”

The private houses on the House Tour are as diverse as their owners. Visitors will enjoy Tanglewood, a stately 1939 Norman style home designed by talented New York architect Thomas E. Graecen II. Designed to suit the lifestyle and penchant for entertaining of the original owner, art deco design and art nouveau accents are reflected in Tanglewood’s interior. House tour visitors will enjoy the William H. Burns Home, circa 1890, a Victorian gem in Berwyn. In addition to building his family home featured on the house tour, Burns, a prominent builder, was responsible for the construction of 16 train stations of the Pennsylvania Railroad, including

Paoli, and the original Tredyffrin Easttown Joint High School, the Berwyn Bank Building and Trinity Presbyterian Church.

The 8th Annual Historic House Tour includes two historic properties in Easttown Township, including the original home of Dr. Stanley Miller of Berwyn. The striking fieldstone construction of the circa 1938 doctor's home and office possesses the architectural character of a home much older than its actual years. Only the second owners of this historic treasure, the current owners have spent the last decade restoring the home, while maintaining its integrity and original, unique architectural features.

Just down the road, also in Easttown Township, is the Hutton House, circa 1842. The impressive Hutton House spans three centuries of additions, from the original 18th century cottage. Nineteenth century census documents for the historic farmhouse indicate that early residents included a retired livery stable keeper, wagon drivers, a gardener, and a stable boss. Today's owners are newlyweds and continue to research the house in an effort to uncover the identity of the reputed ghost from 1842.

Another not to be missed stop on the 8th Annual Historic House Tour is Willowbrook Farm in the Great Valley area of Tredyffrin Township. The imposing 18th century home has the distinction of having served twice as a Vassar Show House, including the last year of the event in 2006. Throughout the years, owners of Willowbrook have entertained and hosted many well-known artists, musicians and politicians including President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rolling Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, Roger Williams and Jerome Hines. One of Willowbrook's owners was movie producer Irwin Yeaworth, famous for his cult classic, "The Blob" filmed in nearby Phoenixville.

Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust welcomes Life's Patina at Willowbrook Farm as the Host Sponsor for this year's house tour. Four to six times a year, Life's Patina owner Meg Veno, hosts barn sales where magic is created in the stone barn of Willowbrook Farm. Each sale includes antiques, unique gifts, artwork and much more. By special arrangement, the Fall Barn Sale will correspond with the 8th Annual Historic House Tour and visitors can enjoy the sale in addition to the house and grounds of Willowbrook Farm. As is the owner's custom, a different nonprofit organization is chosen to receive a portion of the proceeds from each barn sale and Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust is honored as the next beneficiary.

The historic properties and gardens will be open from 12 Noon to 5 PM on Saturday, September 22, rain or shine. Knowledgeable guides staff each home on the tour and house tour admission includes individual house history with map and parking details. Tickets are \$35 and are available online at www.tredyffrinhistory.org using your credit card or downloadable order form and mail with your check to Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust, PO Box 764, Devon, PA 19333-0764.

If you would like additional information about the house tour, consult www.tredyffrinhistory.org, call Pattye Benson at 610.644.6759 or email info@tredyffrinhistory.org Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust is a registered 501c3 organization and contributions are tax-deductible as the law permits.

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