

The Graeme Park Gazette

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2016

Homeschool Day at Graeme Park



On Wednesday, September 21 homeschoolers and their families are invited to enjoy a day of fun and learning at Graeme Park. The Keith House at Graeme Park is a National Historic Landmark built c. 1722 as the summer home of Sir William Keith, then Governor of Pennsylvania. The Georgian-style mansion was later owned and updated by Dr. Thomas Graeme and, during the Revolution, the writer Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson called the estate home. Visitors will learn about life on an 18th century country estate and about the lives of the owners and occupants on this special day just for homeschooling families.

There will be lots of hands-on activities including writing with quill pens, doing colonial chores and playing colonial games, making buzz toys, drilling with the militia, and tours of the historic Keith house. In addition visitors can meet chickens and sheep, see a hearth cooking demonstration, and watch a puppet show, *Love Sails to London*, presented by the Penn's Woods Puppet Theater, based on Elizabeth Graeme's history.

September 21

10 am – 2 pm

\$6/person

** Children must be accompanied by an adult*



Befriend the Past
The Friends of Graeme Park

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 21
Homeschool Day

OCTOBER 5
Lunch & Learn



GRAEME PARK



Graeme Park is the site of the Keith House, an 18th-century historic house, the only remaining home of a governor of colonial Pennsylvania. It is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in partnership with the Friends of Graeme Park, a 501c3 volunteer organization that raises funds, staffs, and promotes the site. The official registration and financial information of The Friends of Graeme Park may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Individuals who need special assistance or accommodation to visit Graeme Park should call (215) 343-0965 in advance to discuss their needs. Pennsylvania TDD relay service is available at (800)654-5984.

TOUR HOURS

Friday - Saturday

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday Noon - 4 p.m.

Last tour starts at 3 p.m.

THE STAFF AT GRAEME PARK

Carla A. Loughlin

Mike MacCausland

THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

Tom Corbett
Governor

James M. Vaughan
Executive Director

Andrew E. Masich
Chairman

From the President of the Friends

Summer is finally here and with it, those warm temperatures that have people scrambling to keep cool. A trip to the beach, to the mountains, to the pool or just staying inside with the air conditioning is sufficient for some. Others take mini-breaks and enjoy the outdoors with a walk, a picnic, a bike ride or something similar; a relaxed break that refreshes the body and spirit.

At Graeme Park, we love the summer. More people visit the site for picnicking, walking the trails or to take a tour of the Keith House. There's more time in our lives, or so it seems. At least, we make time to get away because the weather beckons us to do so. With the kids out of school, calendars are less rigid to a point.

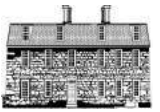
We find that families like to come to visit Graeme Park. Many tell us that their children were here with a school tour. Thanks to the fantastic efforts of our educational team, the kids come away with a greater understanding of colonial times in America. So much so that these children want to learn more. When a family visits the site, we hear on numerous occasions that their son or daughter, who is always with them, visited with their class and they wanted to come back and see more. If that isn't a testament as to how well our school tours reach the children, I don't know what is. Many, many thanks go to our school tour volunteers who give so much of their time and efforts to make this a stellar program to remember.

On the drawing board in the near future are ideas for innovative new living history programs. We are currently working through suggestions and concepts to offer these programs to the public without charge (donations gladly accepted!) since we at Graeme Park feel our local history, which ties into the founding of our country, should be available to all. Check our website soon to see what we have cooked up.

On Saturday, November 26, come out and see our "Continental Christmas". Did you know that more than 2,000 men, under Generals Armstrong, Potter, and Lacey, were encamped here at Graeme Park in December, 1777 through January, 1778 before moving on to Chester County. Come hear their story, as well as Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's trials and tribulations during that time.

Meanwhile, before we start talking about the snows and biting temperatures during the winter at Graeme Park and Valley Forge so long ago, stop by and bring a picnic lunch. Enjoy the summer on our picturesque grounds. We're always glad to see you!

- Beth MacCausland



This spring Bucks Mont Party Rental installed the new tent on the grounds of Graeme Park with improved flooring, lighting upgrades, a timber framed entrance, and cathedral-style windows. The tent is available for rental from April – mid-November and we have a record 21 weddings and parties scheduled for the 2016 season with bookings already starting to come in for 2017 and even some inquiries for 2018. Graeme Park's flexibility and open catering policy allow couples to create a unique DIY wedding at a reasonable cost, or hire professionals to style the event for them.

NEWSBRIEFS

Public Water Comes to Graeme Park

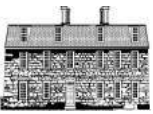
Local residents have surely heard all of the recent news about the water contamination issues in the township due to activities on the former Willow Grove Naval Air Station, and Graeme Park, being downstream from the base, was not immune to concerns about our well water. Fortunately back in May, after years of lobbying and negotiating, we finally got not only authorization to have public water put in, but the project has actually been completed! The state provided archaeological monitoring during the digging process and water lines were brought in through the end of the barn. Additionally extra faucets were installed on the far end of the barn to provide hook-ups to service the tent.

Tree Removal Project

This spring the state removed seven trees from the Graeme Park property which were diseased and dying. Two red oaks at the side and front of the Keith House had been diseased for a number of years, the sycamore opposite the house on the far side of the stream, most likely dated back to the 1770s, had been struck by lightning, an ash by the pond and a nearly 200-year-old ash in front of the barn had

Emerald Ash Borer, and several tall spindly locusts were precariously close to the house.





THE FRIENDS OF GRAEME PARK

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Friends of Graeme Park is to provide on-going support of preservation, maintenance, development, interpretation, education and promotion of Graeme Park.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice President	Jack Washington
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Volunteers	Beth MacCausland
Website	Tony Checchia Melissa Kurek

THE GRAEME PARK GAZETTE

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Editor: Carla A. Loughlin



Befriend the Past
The Friends of Graeme Park

Lunch & Learn

October 5

Lecture
at Graeme Park

Loyalists During the Revolution and What Happened to Them

During the Revolution your neighbor may have been a Loyalist! Jack Washington will present some of these local Loyalists and their fate at the hands of their pro-Revolutionary neighbors.

He will also provide enlightenment on the attempts by General Howe during the occupation of Philadelphia in 1777-78 to recruit some of these disaffected persons into his military establishment.

Jack Washington is a long time Revolutionary War reenactor, volunteer and board member at Graeme Park, and Chair of the Cheltenham Township Historical Commission, which operates the 1682 Richard Wall House.

A continental breakfast will be served before the talk and a hot and cold lunch buffet will follow. Tours of the historic Keith House will also be available. The cost is \$20/person and preregistration is requested.



Lunch will include:

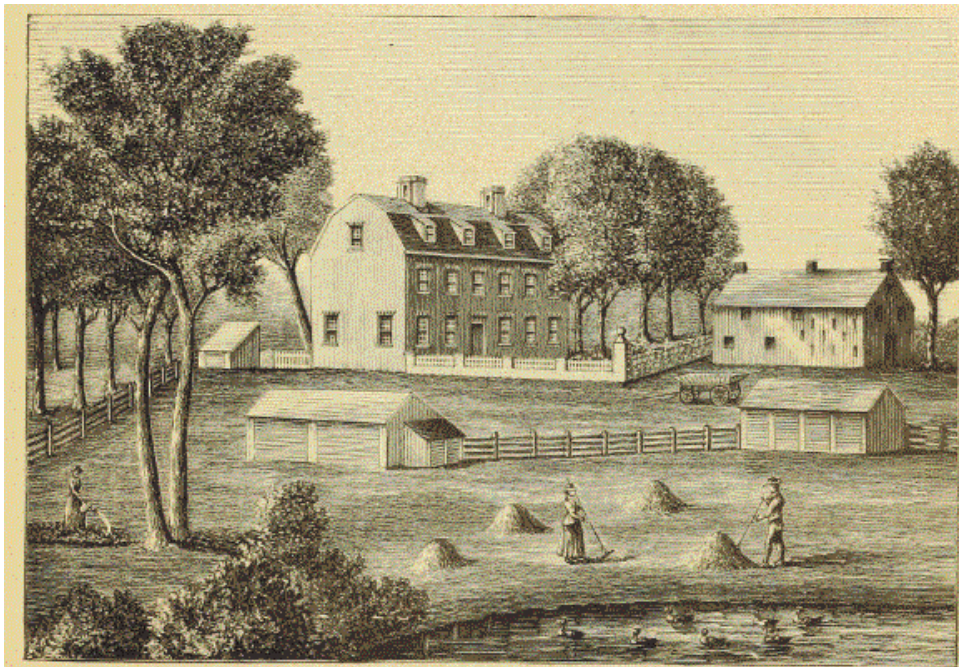
- Hot entrée
- Deli tray with rolls and sandwich "fixins"
- Vegetarian option
- Salad, dessert, beverages

Schedule

- 10:15 a.m. - Check-in & breakfast begins
- 11:00 a.m. - Lecture
- 12:00 noon - Lunch
- After Lunch - Tour of the Historic Keith House

To register for the fall Lunch & Learn, please see the registration form on page 7 of this newsletter

Creating the Graeme Park Landscape



Copied from the original in 1854 by Wm. J. Buck.

GRAEME PARK.

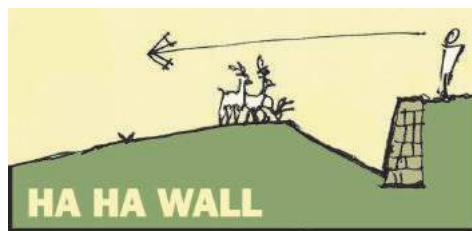
From an old painting, supposed date about 1755.

By Carla A. Loughlin

As much as we appreciate Graeme Park for its beautiful architecture and the interesting history of its former residents, it is also a popular place for passive recreation. Summer evenings often find the locals out walking their dogs, exploring the nature trail or just enjoying the pond and grounds, and we think Dr. Graeme would approve! Graeme was interested not only in the practical aspects of farming his plantation here in Horsham, but in creating a beautiful, pastoral, country retreat which included a deer park for hunting, grazing for livestock, grafted fruit trees, formal gardens, and other opportunities to enjoy

nature. His library contained many volumes on the latest practices in horticulture and landscape architecture; in fact, he prioritized creating the landscape over renovating the house.

In a letter to Thomas Penn, dat-



Picture courtesy of [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ha-ha)

ed July 1, 1755 (he'd been in ownership of Graeme Park for over 15 years at this point) Graeme relates that he has "endeavored to make [Graeme Park] a fine plantation in regards to fields and meadows and enclosures, not much yet regarding the house and gardens. I have a park which encloses 300 acres of land, which is managed in a manner quite different than any I have seen here or elsewhere....about 150 acres of it quite clear of shrubs and bushes, only the tall trees and good young timber saplings standing. This I harrow, sow in grass seed, then brush and roll it. I expect it soon capable of maintaining a large flock of sheep and black cattle; it would be one of the finest Parks for Deer that could well be imagined. I have double-ditched and double-hedged it in, and as a piece of beauty and ornament to a dwelling, I dare venture to say that no nobleman in England but would be proud to have it as his seat."

This idea of using ditches and hedges, or walls, to create a barrier was something Graeme also employed when he got around to designing his formal garden, on the north side of the house. The remnants of the ha-ha still exist in the area between the former garden and the lawn which separates the Penrose-era barn (the Visitors' Center) from the Keith House.

Continued on page 6



So what exactly is a ha-ha? It is a feature that uses a sloped ditch ending in a vertical wall to create a barrier that does not interrupt the view of the landscape. It would have prevented access by grazing livestock into the formal garden area while still allowing Graeme to enjoy the vista he was creating. It was called a ha-ha because it was a sort of visual joke – a moment of discovery, or amusement, when one walked up to the feature, unseen from a distance, and suddenly realized it was there.

In addition to Graeme’s development of the property there were many natural springs and water features already here – Governor Keith named the property Fountain Low because of this; and a branch of the Neshaminy, now called Park Creek in deference to Graeme Park, meandered through the property. *The Old York Road, Old and New* (1892) refers to “the fish-pond...where Lady Fergusson used to feed the finny tribe.” A 1737 sale announcement for the property refers to “a large stream of water

passing by the End of the said house, and a fine spring running by the back part thereof...” which seems to be approximately the current course of the segment of Park Creek which runs through the property.

So the next time you’re out enjoying the Graeme Park property, remember the efforts that Dr. Graeme put into making this such a beautiful and pastoral retreat.



Membership has its Privileges



All membership levels receive:
Free House Tours | Free Admission to All Non-Reserved Events | Quarterly Newsletter
10% Shop Discount

See our website at www.graemepark.org for additional member benefits.

Household _____ \$40 Individual _____ \$25

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

My check payable to the Friends of Graeme Park is enclosed

Please bill my Visa/MC/Discover Card /AMEX

Security Code ____ _

Exp. Date _____

Billing Zip Code _____

Mail to:

Graeme Park, 859 County Line Rd, Horsham, PA 19044



WWII WEEKEND



On April 30 and May 1 we held our 6th annual World War II Weekend. The event included living history reenactors with camp displays representing the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, among others; a battle reenactment between the Americans and the Germans; ceremonies to honor the WWII vets present at the event as well as those who have passed; The Ultimate Abbott and Costello Tribute Show; swing dance lessons and a big band concert with the West Chester Swing Kings; Rosie the Riveter; equipment demonstrations and displays; period vehicles (military and civilian), and more. Over 1,000 visitors enjoyed the weekend.



To reserve your spot for the fall Lunch & Learn lecture fill out the form and return to: Graeme Park - 859 County Line Road - Horsham, PA 19044

\$20/person

Includes lecture, continental breakfast, lunch & tour

Please add my email to your list to receive occasional notices of Graeme Park news and events including the next Lunch & Learn Lecture

My check for \$20/pp is enclosed. Please make checks out to "The Friends of Graeme Park"

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

eMail: _____

Card # _____

Exp. Date: _____ Code: _____

Billing Zip Code: _____

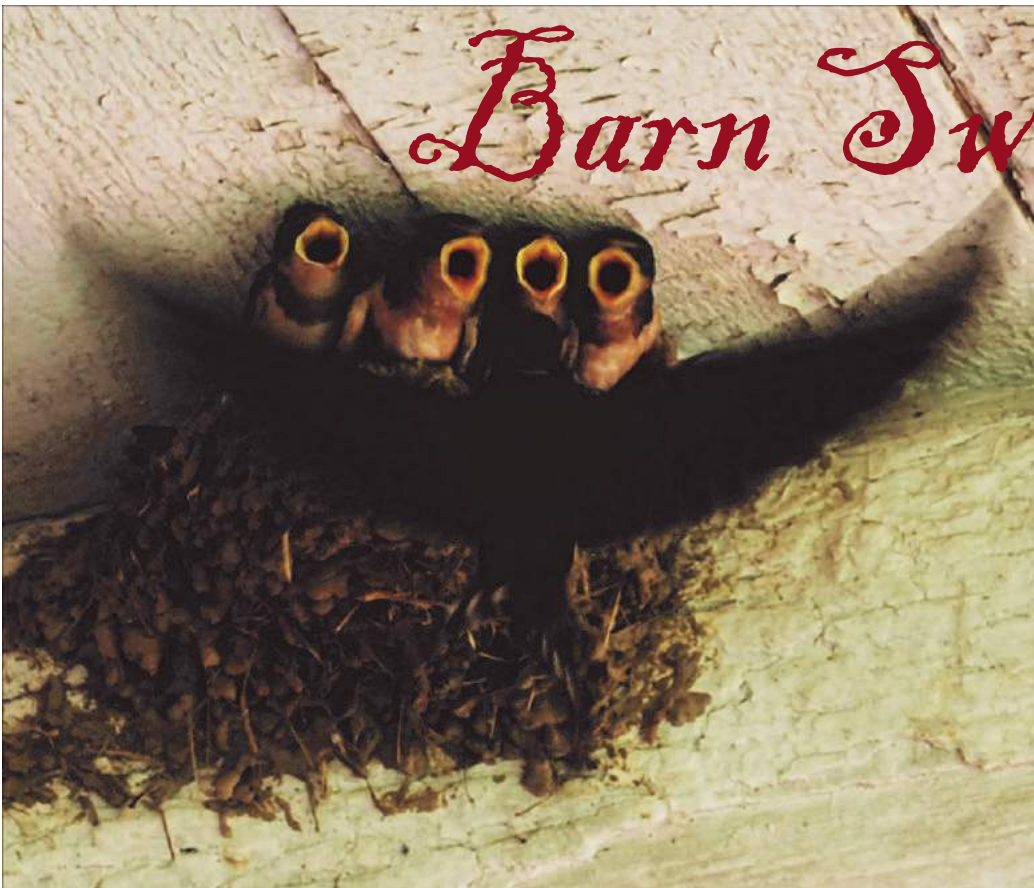


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859 County Line Rd.
Horsham, PA 19044
(215) 343-0965
www.graemepark.org

Address Service Requested

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This time of year the barn swallow nests lodged in the joists of the forebay in front of the Visitors' Center are an active place as the parents fly in and out feeding families of hungry babies. This activity never fails to attract the attention of our visitors, many of whom have never seen swallows up close like this before. In fact Graeme Park provides habitat for many birds and mammals, which, while not rare, are not commonly seen in our populous suburban community either.