



The Bowne House Historical Society, Inc.

# Bowne House

circa 1661



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November 16, 2015

Dear Members and Friends of Bowne House:

We have had an eventful year at the museum. We would like to bring you up to date on some of our activities and share our plans for 2016.

Phase I, the Structural Stabilization and Exterior Restoration of the house ended in early 2015. As construction activity wound down, we resumed a regular schedule of guided tours. In September we welcomed Lizzie Martin, Ph.D. as Director of Education. Lizzie has been assisting with visitors and developing and coordinating new programs with a special focus on children. We have seen increased interest from both local school groups and visiting adults. John Bowne and the Flushing Remonstrance are part of the New York curriculum and educating the public about Flushing's role in American history is part of our core mission.

We have been busy planning for the Phase II, the Interior Restoration. We are coordinating with the Preservation Unit of the NYC Department of Design and Construction on this next phase of work. In conjunction with planning for this next phase, we have taken these steps:

- The University of Florida, Department of Interior Design is conducting a laser scanning project. This technique involves 3D scanning of the house to give a concise picture of current conditions and to provide important documentation.
- Integrated Conservation Resources, Inc. of New York City has been assessing and analyzing plaster and interior finishes and will make recommendations for historically accurate repairs and preservation of existing surfaces.
- Donald R. Friary, Director Emeritus of Historic Deerfield and Chair of our Museum Advisory Committee is preparing new interpretive and furnishing plans, incorporating some recent discoveries. These interpretive and furnishing plans will influence aspects of the interior restoration.

We capped an active year with the celebration on Saturday, October 10th of the 70th anniversary of the Bowne House Historical Society, a day also commemorating the signing of the original charter of the Town of Flushing in 1645 and the 50th anniversary of the NYC Landmarks Preservation law. The day-long festivities began with a breakfast in the garden, followed by engaging speeches by Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, Chair of NYC Landmarks50 Alliance, Donald Friary, and Richard Epstein, Laurence A. Tisch Professor of Law at New York University. Their topics were: Courage and Commitment; Discovering John Bowne; and Religious Liberty Today. We were joined by four of our elected officials: US Congresswoman Grace Meng, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, NYS Senator Tony Avella, and NYS Assemblyman Ron Kim, who presented proclamations. The afternoon offered a variety of history-related activities. We were delighted by the enthusiastic turnout of members, friends, descendants and elected officials as well as descendants of some of the founding families of the Society.

- Our late spring and summer activities included NYC's Department of Parks and Recreation's "It's My Park Day", the Yale Day of Service, the New York Landmark Conservancy's Sacred Sites Weekend and NY State's Path Through History Weekend.

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- We had an active intern program, with local high school and college students working as museum assistants, helping with tours, developing marketing materials, conducting research, writing computer code, and engaging in a variety of other projects.
- We welcomed a new volunteer: Ellen Spindler, a retired attorney, has been helping in our office and is researching some of our collections.

Our programs over the next few months are in formation but will include the following:

- From December 2nd through December 10th at the Queens Library Flushing there will be an exhibit: The Bowne House Historical Society – a Retrospective. The exhibit will include a selection of documents and photographs from the founding and early years of the museum.
- The 28th annual Historic House Holiday Tour will take place on Sunday, December 6th; seven local sites will be open and special programs are planned. Tickets may be purchased online or at the door – check our website for additional details.
- Also on the 6th, at 1 P.M., we will hold a children’s workshop –Then and Now at the Bowne House: Exploring History with Artifacts and Children’s Activities from the Past. This workshop will be held at the Flushing Library.
- In March we will have another exhibit and additional children’s workshops, along with talks on archaeology. Please check our website for further details as the date approaches.

The museum has continued to strengthen its partnership with other organizations. Our ties to the community continue to grow as we introduce new volunteers and visitors to the house. We are always looking for new ways to engage our audience.

We would like to thank all of you who contributed to our success this year. A grant from the New York Preservation Archive Project is helping us as we continue to organize our extensive collection of materials with the assistance of two archivists. We are also grateful to the Acorn Foundation, Bolton St. John, New York Community Trust, The Gerson Family Foundation, The Colonial Lords of Manors in America, the Valley Foundation, Flushing Cemetery, the Queensboro Hill Community Church, and to our members and friends. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the generous gift from the family of Mary Jones, a longtime Flushing resident and hostess at the museum. This gift will be directed towards a series of special educational programs in her memory. We are also grateful to Councilman Peter Koo, whose ongoing support has helped us continue our community outreach, and to a Historic House Trust Board Member for a gift in kind for the museum.

Please include Bowne House in your year end giving plans. Many of our educational programs are free and open to the public and your support helps us keep these programs going. Included here is a response form: you may direct your donation to Operations, Interior Restoration, Education, Collections or Endowment.

Thank you all for contributing to another great year at the Bowne House. On behalf of our trustees, I would like to wish you a peaceful and Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Morris Hylton III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Morris Hylton, III

Encl: 2015 Year End Appeal and Membership Form