DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS

by Dorothy M. Kurtz

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Hello. Despite the tragedy of September 11, I hope everybody had a good Winter Solstice.

In many ways, a lot can happen in a year. The best evidence of this is what became of London's Millennium Dome. In 2000, when I visited the Dome, it was like a mini World's Fair; then, it closed in 2001, and its fate remained unknown. Stop Press! I just learned from BBC news that a USA company, Meridian-Delta, bought the Dome. They plan to turn it into a complex for sports and

A lot can happen in a few years as well. The evidence of this is in the changing ownership of Dimensional Press effective in 2002. At that time, Virginia Louise Davis will be selling Dimensional Press to me. (Ms. Davis wants to go back to freelance writing.) So, this issue of DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS and an additional one-shot publication will be the last bits of literature published by Dimensional Press under Louise's ownership. (Wish me luck in my new business venture.)

Meanwhile, this issue will cover a day-trip to Philadelphia, a few day-trips to Suburban Pennsylvania, and the highlight of this issue: my recent trip to England.

In addition to those two guide books to London that I've mentioned in Volume 1, Issue 4 of DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS, I also recommend two other sources: (1) Let's Go: London, ISBN 0-312-27043-7, published by St. Martin's Press, history by visiting the form of the form o

on news stands in the UK and in certain bookstores in the USA. Similar to its counterpart, Time Out: New York, this magazine can keep you up to date on theater, cinema, nightlife, and other events.

AT THE "GHOST" HOUSE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Many people in the 18th century kept a very detailed account about their homes. In return, the insurance and fire companies who insured these homes also had copies of those records. Years later, these records helped historians in their efforts to restore or reconstruct those same houses. Nevertheless, nobody could find a detailed account about Ben Franklin's home. So, in the 1970s, builders constructed metal frames that outlined Franklin's house and print shop above some cut-a-way pits showing the foundations of these buildings. Thus, the term "ghost" house (and print shop).

Saturday, October 6, I paid a visit to Franklin Court, 316-318 Market St., Philadelphia (215-597-8974). If William Penn was the architect for the city of Philadelphia, then Franklin was the city's carpenter because he introduced institutions that have been in Philadelphia to this very day. There was a lot more to Franklin Court than those metaloutlined buildings. A nearby underground museum displayed a small portrait gallery of the Franklin family on one side of the room and some 18th-century furniture on the other side, including the "armonica," a glass musical instrument that Franklin invented. Another room showing a mirror and neon lights reflected his interests as a statesman, scientist, printer, postmaster, inventor, and other trades. A nearby cinema presented an interesting biographical film. Finally, in the main museum room, I listened to other people's opinions about Dr. Franklin by dialing a certain telephone number. In other parts of this room, I read passages from his famous publication, Poor Richard's Almanac, and I viewed other exhibits about Franklin and his achievements. Situated in the center of the room, electric spotlights showed doll figures presenting three climatic scenes in Franklin's career as a entertainment events. That's all I know so far. statesman. (Those scenes included England in 1765 while he protested the Stamp Act, France during the American Revolution as he gained the support of the French, and Philadelphia in 1787 during the Constitutional Convention.) In addition, I saw some 18th-century structures nearby: houses from 1786 that Franklin rented out to tenants. One house served as an 18th-century-style print shop and bookbindery, and the other house served as a working post office (with a postal museum upstairs). If nothing else, I learned that Franklin was a Renaissance man (who was born a few centuries after the Renaissance), and he accomplished quite a bit considering that he only had a few years of formal education!

A DAY OF HISTORY AND SHOPPING

Sunday, October 7, I got my share of (610-834-1550). In the Visitor's Center, I saw Revolutionary War artifacts, George Washington's tent, and a bookstore that sold 18th-century America. A cinema nearby presented and stamps. Finally, the gallery store sold a 15-minute film about what Washington and his many of those same items. troops endured in Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-78. My favorite section was Washington's Headquarters at Isaac Pott's House (1770). This fieldstone house showed two floors Gardens, Rt. 1, Kennett Square, PA of rooms opened to the public. Although Washington and his officers used the downstairs Gardens showed a different garden theme for rooms for their offices, upstairs, I glanced at each season, and even if the weather was less bedrooms where his officers slept (a bit crowded) and the bedroom that Washington shared good portion of my day. with his wife, Martha. At another interesting section of this park (on private property located within the park), I looked inside the Neo-Gothic Washington Memorial Chapel (that serves as an Episcopal church) and the nearby Valley Forge Historical Society Museum containing more items having to do with Washington, the Revolutionary War, and the 18th via videos and exhibits, I learned more about century.

Even though my visit to Valley Forge was peaceful and historical, my visit to nearby King of Prussia was not as peaceful. It would be more correct to call this town an "edge-city" outside of Philadelphia. Anyhow, visited the Court and Plaza at King of Prussia the conservatory. Built in 1921, this vast (commonly called "The King of Prussia Mall"). Because I'm not an impulse shopper, I don't usually go out of my way to visit a shopping center. Nevertheless, this shopping center has few hours that I've ever spent in my life! been the third largest shopping mall in North America (after the West Edmonton Mall, Alberta, VISITING ENGLAND IN THE MILLENNIUM: THE SEQUEL Canada, and the Mall of America in Minnesota). Unlike the first two largest shopping malls, this mall had no entertainment. On the other hand, this mall contained over 400 retail establishments as well as several restaurants (unless you can call shopping and eating "entertainment"). The variety of shops ranged from upscale to moderate and gave serious competition to Center City Philadelphia's retailers!

LOOKING AT DUST COLLECTORS

Many of you have seen the ads for the Franklin Mint. Some of you may have had the display space and money for many of those glad that there has been a place like the PA (610-459-6168), for me to visit.

video about the organization and craftsmen of Franklin Mint at work, I walked through the museum. In different rooms that circled this building, I viewed sculptures, replicas of small-scale automobile models, dolls, items from the House of Fabergé, and a Star Trek (ST) I noticed plants (especially palms) from the room. With an interior that looked similar to arainforest. (4) Finally, in the Princess of space station, the ST room contained several models of starships, insignias, figurines of STplants from 10 different climate zones and an characters, phasers, a 3-D chess set, and other aquarium in the lower level. The botanical items. Different videos in the museum demonstrated small-scale car model and doll making. This museum also dedicated special sections to Princess Diana (displaying a gown that she wore) and Jacqueline Kennedy

(displaying a necklace that she wore). In addition, the museum included seasonal displays books about the American Revolution and life inas well as displays of collector plates, coins,

A GARDEN FOR ALL SEASONS

Anytime of the year I visited Longwood (610-388-1000), I had a good time. Longwood than perfect, the conservatory alone took up a

Saturday, November 3, the early morning rain cleared up and the weather became sunny by the time I arrived at Longwood Gardens. At the first place I entered, the Visitor Center, I saw a brief slide show introducing me to the highlights of these gardens. After this, I walked over to the Peirce-du Pont House. Here, the history of Longwood Gardens; its founder, Pierre S. du Pont; and the former owners of the land, the Peirce family. (Parts of this house go back to 1730.) On past visits, I toured most of Longwood's 1,050 acres of grounds with its gardens, fountains, meadows, and woodlands; on after overdosing on history at Valley Forge, I this recent visit, I spent most of the day at greenhouse contained enough colorful flowers and tropical plants to keep me occupied for a few hours. This was one of the most pleasant

I hope the above title satisfied those of you who insisted that the Millennium started in 2001 and not 2000. (I won't get into that debate.)

Monday, December 10, I flew on a British Airways 777 from Philadelphia to London Heathrow.

Tuesday, December 11, after taking the tube (London Underground) into London and checking into my hotel (Tavistock), I took the tube out to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, TW9 3AB (020-8332-5655). Covering 300 acres, I couldn't see all of Kew Gardens in a day. Thank goodness for the Kew Explorer tram that toured most of the grounds and stopped near the main $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) +\left(1$ collectable items; I didn't! That was why I was attractions. Along with its gardens, woodlands, museum, and galleries, I visited my favorite Franklin Mint Museum, Route 1, Franklin Center, four attractions: (1) Evolution House displayed the looks, sounds, and smells of how plants $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left($ Saturday, October 27, after I saw a short have evolved from 3,500 million years ago to the present. (2) The Victorian-styled Temperate House, Kew's largest glass house, showed citrus plants, the world's largest indoor plant, and other plants from warmer climates. (3) Inside the Palm House, another Victorian glass house, Wales Conservatory (opened in 1987), I saw gardens at $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Kew}}$ were the largest that I have ever seen. When I was there, I definitely learned how plants provided us with food, fuel, shelter, and oxygen. In the words of the late Dr. Carl Sagan: "We need the plants more than

they need us."

Wednesday, December 12, I took a National Express Coach (bus) to Cambridge. Once there, Itrain to Brighton. This resort has been so visited King's College Chapel, CB2 1ST (01223-331212). As I entered this chapel, I realized that I walked into a very special place. Looking up, I saw the largest fan-vaulted stone ceiling in the world. Surrounding the walls, I noticed large stained-glass windows. The upper windows depicted Old Testament lessons that foretold events displayed in the lower windows showing British resorts, such as Blackpool and New Testament events. Along with relief-styled Southend, it used to be a popular destination ornamentation and carvings inside and outside for a long seaside vacation. (Nowadays, it only of this chapel, I viewed the famous painting of attracts daytrippers, weekenders, and those who the Adoration of the Magi by Peter Paul Rubens, can't afford a seaside vacation in Southern displayed above the alter. Exhibits in the side Europe or overseas.) Unlike Blackpool and chapels explained the chapel's history, building techniques, furnishings, and especially the stained-glass windows. Completed crowd in its heyday. By the late- 1700s and around 1547 (except for the installment of the early-1800s, sea bathing started to replace West Window in 1879), this chapel was one of the most beautiful Gothic fantasies I've ever most famous visitors to Brighton included the witnessed.

After lunch, I stopped into the Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington St., CB2 1RB (01223-332900). Starting with the Upper Galleries, I looked at European paintings, furniture, and sculpture from the 1200s through a style similar to Indian architecture. Known the 20th century. Many of the rooms displaying as the Royal Pavilion (01273-603005), this these artworks, however, looked like works of place turned out to be the ultimate European art themselves. The high-domed ceilings showed version of an Oriental fantasy. Although elaborate carvings, and many of the walls displayed inlay marble. A marble staircase led interior displayed a Chinese style. Even if art from Egypt, Greece, and Rome. (Even if you any kind of Asian way, I still felt swept away are not into fine and applied art, the buildingby what I saw in this seaside retreat for the alone is worth a visit.)

Thursday, December 13, became the day my friend, Val, and her son, Andrew, drove me to Bath. Once in Bath, I toured the Roman Bath Museum, Stall St. (01225-477785). Via an audio-headset player, I learned about the history of this place as I walked around the complex. Discovered and excavated in 1880, this connection. Compared to other places on this area displayed the remains of the Roman Bath intrip so far, the Royal Pavilion proved unique, addition to sculptures, mosaics, and other Roman items in an underground museum. The temple and statues constructed above the bath were a Victorian interpretation of a Roman temple. Meanwhile, the audio tour also gave some details about the day-to-day life in Roman First off, this building itself looked very Britain. Bath itself has been a lovely city containing many honey-colored stone buildings constructed in a Georgian style. At that time (1700s), Bath became a fashionable resort for the social elite.

drove me through the countryside in Somerset and Wiltshire Counties. I saw many towns and to see otherwise. (Thanks Val and Andrew!) Finally, we stopped at Stonehenge (near (01980-623108). Although I only had a few minutes to see this circle of stones, I came away impressed by knowing I saw a structure that dated back (in some parts) about 5,050 years. (Despite studies and speculations by archaeologists and historians, Stonehenge stillminerals. I especially liked the museum's

Site.)

Friday, December 14, found me taking the popular for Londoners to spend a day or weekend by the sea, that it was nicknamed "London by the Sea." Nevertheless, forget about sandy beaches; Brighton's beach contained rocks. My British friends told me that most people just sat on a deck chair and enjoyed the sea breezes, or they visited the amusement pier, Promenade, shops, and museums. Like other Southend that catered to the working class, Brighton attracted a more fashionable social going to spa resorts in popularity. One of the future King George IV. In the late-1700s, he bought a farmhouse and hired Henry Holland to turn it into a Neoclassical- styled villa. Then, between 1815 to 1822, George hired John Nash to enlarge the building and design it into designed outside in an Indian style, the inside me down to the Lower Level. Here, I saw ancientthis building has not been exactly authentic in King. Each room seemed more impressive than the last room as I admired the interiors containing bright pastel colors, gilding, and chinoiserie designs in the furniture, lamps, artworks, and other items. Via guided tour and video, I learned more about the history of Brighton, the Royal Pavilion, and about Brighton's royal and it was worth the trip to this seaside resort.

Saturday, December 15, I stayed in London and spent the day at the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd., SW7 5BD (0207942-5000). interesting. Built in a Victorian-Gothic style, it reminded me of a cathedral devoted to natural science. In place of the usual cathedral gargoyles, I noticed statues of animals (from extinct and non-extinct species) After stopping at a pub for lunch, Andrew on the outside walls. Life Galleries and Earth Galleries were the two main sections of this museum. After riding an escalator through a villages that I would never have had the chanceglobe, I viewed the following exhibit areas in the Earth Galleries: The Power Within, Restless Surface, Earth's Treasures, From the Beginning, Amesbury) at the junction of A303 and A344/A360 Earth Today and Tomorrow, and Visions of Earth. By pictures, text, models, samples, computers, audio presentations, and videos, I learned more about the history and formation of the Earth. Life Galleries showed the usual exhibit areas: animal displays, plant exhibits, and rocks and remains a mystery that is now a World Heritage presentation of rocks, minerals, and

meteorites. Displayed in old-fashioned wood-and-glass cases, I looked at huge collections of rock, mineral, and meteorite samples. Other areas of this museum covered humankind's place in all of this. Therefore, I into the stage door to meet John. After he definitely experienced an educational day here.posed for a few pictures, we had a bit of an

Sunday, December 16, I spent a relaxing day with another friend, Doris. Together, we walked around the neighborhood near my hotel, the Bloomsbury area, and we saw the main reading room of the former British Library. (Now open to the public, the British Museum administers this room.)

Monday, December 17, I checked out of my hotel and took the train to Woking, Surrey. Upon arrival, I checked into the Holiday Inn, and later, I walked to the town center. Woking no panto show scheduled for the next night, and became ground zero in H. G. Wells's 1898 novel, Woking is not too far from London.) Therefore, War of the Worlds. (Wells lived in Woking when we said our good-byes before he headed back to he wrote the book.) In 1998, the town unveiled London, and I returned to my hotel. a stainless-steel Martian in the town square. Anyhow, I came to Woking to see John Inman in aand checked into the Royal National hotel. pantomime play (panto) called Aladdin at the Later, I took some short walks around the city New Victoria Theatre, the Ambassadors, Peacock before retiring to my room. Centre, GU21 1GQ (01483-545900). I've seen two pantos starring John Inman before: 1998 at the Airways back to Philly to conclude another Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, where John played Nurse Wanda (governess to Maid Marion's younger brother and sister) in the Adventures of Robin Hood; and 1999 at the Cliff's Pavilion, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, where details about my past overseas trips. I don't John played Dame Wanda (mother of Jack) in Jackusually have room in my newsletter for talking and the Beanstalk. (It's a bit hard to explain about these trips, but Louise Davis and I are panto, but I'll try: Starting in the 1800s, many British children spent some part of the Christmas holiday attending a panto. Most pantos have a pantomime Dame or the role of a matronly woman played by a man, and several have a principal boy played by a woman. [How's that for gender confusion?] This is a very active play for the cast and audience because the audience are encouraged to cheer the hero, called Overseas National Airlines from New York boo the villain, shout clues to the actors, sing along in some parts of the show, and take sightseeing and shopping; by night, I visited a part in other ways. There are many naughty jokes with plenty of double-entendres to entertain the adults. [Naughty but not obscene (another DC8) called Global Airlines from JFK because many of the jokes would go over the heads of small children.] The plots are usuallycity, and I visited Windsor and Canterbury. simple: the hero tries to win the hand of the leading lady, but the villain tries to foil the and I could afford to take British Airways (on hero's plans. [Of course, the hero wins in the a 747) from Philadelphia International to end.] Included are plenty of comedy skits, singing, dancing, and very elaborate or bizarre London, I visited York and Stratford-Upon-Avon. costumes, especially on the pantomime Dame.) For all three of the pantos that I've seen, at JFK to Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris. I the show's end, John Inman wore a pink-sequined-evening gown and invited a few children on stage to join him in a sing-a-long Switzerland. Once there, I spent another four to "Let's All Sing Like the Birdies Sing." Afterward, he gave the children some chocolates on Air France (on a small jet) back to Paris, for their efforts. Some of John's costumes and and then, I switched to TWA to fly back to JFK. jokes were the same in all three pantos, and some were different. In this particular panto, to London Heathrow. I spent most of my time in John played Widow Wanda Twankey (mother to Aladdin). That night, he wore a Blue-Willow dress, a Wash-&-Spin-laundry dress, and a few other theme dresses along with some equally bizarre headdresses. Because I sat in the frontI stayed for two nights in Southend-on-Sea to row, I felt the full effects of the lights, sounds, and music. All of the performers showed

a lot of talent with their acting, jokes, singing, dancing, or acrobatics. Overall, I spent a very funny and colorful three hours in this theater. After the show, security let me articulate conversation. Mr. Inman mentioned that he was feeling OK, and he was recording a radio interview when he heard the news on September 11. He stated: "When I first saw the disaster on the news, I thought that it was a Bruce Willis disaster film." John also told me that he planned to retire from show business. (He is 66 years old.) I thought Mr. Inman was very kind to grant me this interview because he had to return to London that night. (There was

Tuesday, December 18, I returned to London

Wednesday, December 19, I flew British successful overseas trip.

In these last few years, I have received letters from some of you asking me for more $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) +\left(1\right)$ working on a one-shot publication covering 64 attractions that I've visited on those overseas trips. The zine should be out in a few months. Meanwhile, here's a brief synopsis about my overseas trips.

1976: I was 20, young, naive, and goodlooking (or so, I was told). For my first overseas trip, I flew on a charter jet (DC8) JFK to London Gatwick. By day, I went few discos and pubs.

1982: I flew on another charter jet to Gatwick. I did some more sightseeing in the

1984: Airline deregulation was kicking in, London Heathrow. In addition to sightseeing in

1985: I flew on TWA (on another 747) from spent four days sightseeing in the city of lights before I boarded a TGV train for Geneva, days sightseeing in that city. Finally, I flew

1998: I flew on a BA 777 from Philadelphia London sightseeing. Later, I stayed overnight in Wolverhampton and saw a show.

1999: I took another BA 777 to London. Again, I did more sightseeing in London. Later, sightsee and catch a show.

2000: I have the details of this trip in

Volume 1, Issue 4, of DOTTY'S DIMENSIONS. I mostly stayed in London and visited Oxford for a day. Later, I spent two nights in Blackpool.

2001: The details on this trip are right above you in the last essay in this issue. I won't say, "forever," but it seems most likely that this will be my last overseas trip for a long time. So, that's why I visited more places in England: London, Cambridge, Bath, Stonehenge, Brighton, and Woking.

In the next issue (my first as the new owner of Dimensional Press), I plan to write about a few weekend trips to New York City, and two science fiction conventions: one in Maryland and another in New York. Have a good 2002!