

AUTUMN 2023

HUNTER HOUSE VICTORIAN MUSEUM

ISSUE NO. 9

My dear sister
I hardly know
how to express my deep
sorrow & sympathy for
you now in your trouble
& desolation. Harry wrote
& told me
of your loss; poor
must be
How we

2 Anson House
Lufneff Park
Sept. 4th
My dear Annie
I was so gl
have a letter from
I had so often
and would
little do
I am

What's inside our latest issue:

Letter from the Director
Fall Event Schedule
Exclusive Member Events

The Garroting Panic of 1862
Docent and Member Highlights
Gift Shop Highlight

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Greetings Friends,

I want to thank you all for a successful summer of tours and events. I have enjoyed the stories you all have shared with me, the Hunter House volunteers, and staff members of the special times or moments you experienced while you were here this summer. We are truly blessed to have such wonderful friends that make our work here rewarding and fun!

With the close of summer, we usher in the cooler weather and longer nights of fall. Fall brings our immersive events and over the top costumed tea events. We look forward to all of the creative costumes and ideas you all will bring to our home away from home. We have many fun and educational events planned to stimulate your minds and jumpstart your artistic side this upcoming season.

In addition to our events, our annual mourning exhibit will be on display during the month of October. Whether you are planning on coming for one of our events, the exhibit, or just simply to be in this lovely Victorian home, we look forward to welcoming you back this fall.

Yours in Service,

Renee Evans
Executive Museum Director



AUTUMN SPECIAL EVENT SCHEDULE

All events require advance registration and payment, unless otherwise noted. Please call 757-623-9814 or email hhvmwhitney@gmail.com to make a reservation request.



MAPLE SPICE TEA

Sunday, September 3rd

Seatings at 12pm & 3 PM

\$30 Members/\$35 Not-Yet Members/\$15 Children under 13

"And all at once summer collapsed into fall" - Oscar Wilde

Maple spice and everything nice! Welcome Autumn with maple and spice inspired sweets, seasonal savories, and our signature Vanilla Chai tea blend.



THE LETHAL LECTURE: A CASE OF MALPRACTICE

Our 2023 Murder Mystery Event



Saturday, Sept. 30th from 5-9pm

THE LETHAL LECTURE: A CASE OF MALPRACTICE

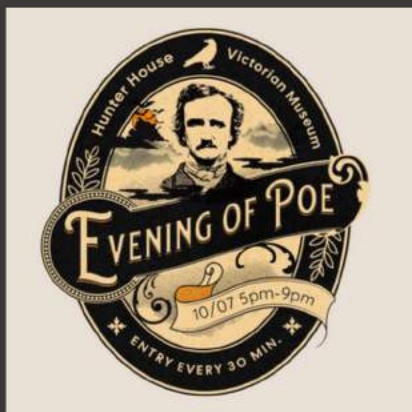
Saturday, September 30th

5pm - 9pm

Entry every 30 minutes

\$10 members/\$15 for non-members

Revel in intrigue and drama at this medically themed event. Attend a public medical lecture in 1905 where someone has been the victim of malicious intent. See if you have what it takes to solve the mystery at this lethal lecture.



AN EVENING OF POE

Saturday, October 7th

5pm - 9pm

Entry every 30 minutes

\$10 members/\$15 for non-members

Enjoy an interactive immersive show as we travel through the Hunter House with narrations and performances celebrating the works of Edgar Allen Poe. Light refreshments to follow in the museum garden.



HISTORIC HAUNTINGS

A spooky evening with
the Hunter House
Victorian Museum and
Moses Myers House

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 14TH

\$5 for Members
\$10 for Non-Members

Event begins at 4pm at
the Moses Myers House.

HISTORIC HAUNTINGS WITH THE MOSES MYERS HOUSE

Saturday, October 14th at 4pm

\$5 for members, \$10 for non-members

In this combined fall event, guests will begin the program at the Moses Myers House learning about the true tales of the Myers family and asking the question, "Do the ghosts of the past still walk these haunted halls?". We will then enjoy a lanterned walk down Freemason Street to the Hunter House while hearing spooky stories of Old Norfolk. At the Hunter House we will transport ourselves to the 19th century and learn about the Victorian Era's obsession with the supernatural.



WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY: A LESSON IN SORCERY

Saturday, October 28th and Sunday, October 29th

Seatings at 12pm & 3 PM

\$30 Members/\$35 Not-Yet Members/\$15 Children under 13

Fans of the wizarding world will be delighted with our annual witches tea as we welcome special guests from the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Don your house colors with pride as we compete for the house cup.

EXCLUSIVE MEMBER EVENTS

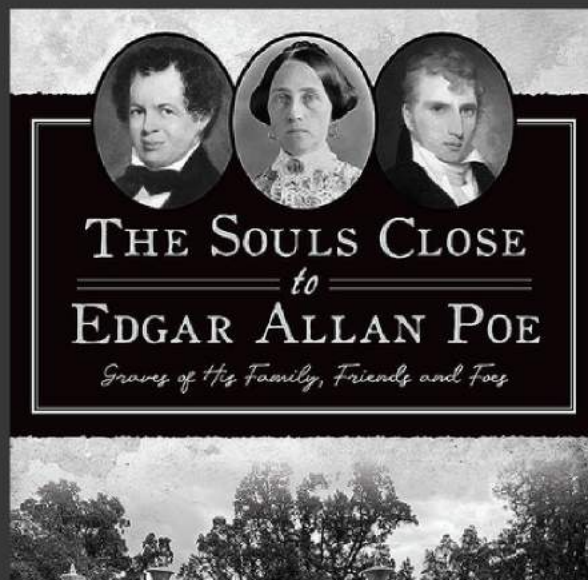
All events require advance registration and payment, unless otherwise noted. Please call 757-623-9814 or email hhvmkirby@gmail.com to make a reservation request.



PAINTING IN THE GARDEN

Saturday, September 16th at 3pm
\$10 for Members, \$20 for guests of members

Enjoy a lovely afternoon of tea and painting with local artist Michelle Yuan as she guides us through painting a Victorian garden scene. All supplies will be provided, just bring your creative enthusiasm!



THE SOULS CLOSE TO EDGAR ALLEN POE: AN EXCLUSIVE LITERATURE EVENT

Friday, October 6th at 7pm
FREE for Members, \$5 for non-members

Come join us for an evening of literary delight as Virginia Author Sharon Pajka discusses her new book *The Souls Close to Edgar Allan Poe: Graves of his Family, Friends, and Foes*. Books will be available for purchase on the night of the event.

DOCENT AND MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

DOUG DOCENT

How did you find about the Hunter House?

It was by accident. It started in September of 2017 when I first came in. At the time Jim Fish volunteered at HHVM who I knew from the Tidewater coin club and asked if any of us with relevant coins to the era of the house would be able to come by and show some coins. So, I came in and brought some of my Victorian coins and set up in the dining room, met Oscar the Owl and just never left!

What is your coffee or tea order?

Yes! I drink both. I love simple black tea and I like just a bit of coffee with my cream and sugar.

What is your favorite thing about the Hunter House? Or Favorite Hunter House Find?

Oh Boy! There's too many but I'll narrow it down to the tube of tooth paste in the bathroom just because it's so old and has a hole probably from all the chemicals that were in it. I do miss Oscar the owl.

What is your favorite thing about the mourning exhibit?

Everything! Having the coffin out in the front parlor always surprises people and I love hearing what people think is haunted.

What is your favorite part of volunteering with HHVM?

Although I don't have the degrees to prove it, I like to consider myself a historian. I've always loved studying history and doing historical reenactments. Being a tour guide allows me the opportunity to teach, in a way. At the end of the day working here keeps me out of trouble.



SHARI HARPER MEMBER

What drew you to the Hunter House?

The command I worked at had a branch of the USO and there were brochures highlighting local places of interest. One was about the Hunter House, which I picked up because it piqued my interest. I came for a tour on opening day in April and was invited to be a volunteer. I'm embarrassed to say that I'm a Tidewater native and had never visited the Hunter House! I've always been drawn to the Victorian period, especially the literature. I guess I was born too late!

What event is your favorite at the museum?

I love all of the fall "Spooky Season" programs. My favorite event is either Murder Mystery or Poe Night.

How long have you been a Hunter House member?

We moved to Norfolk about thirteen years ago. Sylvia was born in Norfolk and has lived here all 10 years of her life.

What is your favorite thing about the mourning exhibit?

Probably the spirit photography and the influence of spiritualism during the period. Also mourning jewelry and the etiquette regarding mourning clothing and customs.



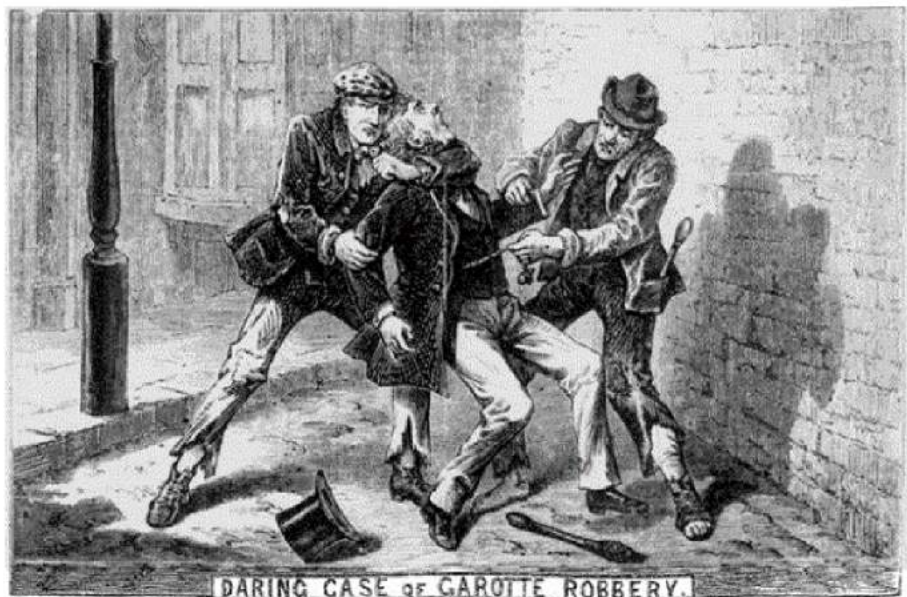
CHOKED BY FEAR: EXPLORING LONDON'S GARROTING PANIC OF 1862

By Alexandra Whiteside

The Garroting Panic of 1862, centered in Victorian London, sparked fear and public outcry. Beginning in the late 1850's, British newspapers, including the influential conservative periodical "Punch," regularly reported brutal attacks and robberies carried out by criminals known as "garroters," who used various methods of strangulation or choking to subdue their victims. This involved sneaking up behind someone, often in dimly lit streets or alleyways, and using a chokehold or piece of cord or a scarf to strangle the victim into submission. Garroters sometimes acted alone, but typically acted in groups of two, with one doing the choking and one emptying the victim's pockets. Occasionally, a third accomplice, usually a woman, was used to distract the victim prior to the attack.

The public's sense of insecurity and heightened awareness of urban crime due to these newspaper reports culminated in an outright panic in 1862 and led to the Garroter's Act of 1863 which imposed harsh punishment on this particular type of criminal, including imprisonment, flogging, and - most importantly - "transportation" to hard labor in Australia.

In the mid-19th century, London was experiencing rapid urbanization. The city's population was growing, and the divide between wealth and poverty was starkly apparent.



The Garroting Panic was fueled by a combination of factors during this time, including economic hardship resulting in a surge in crime, and media coverage whipped up by lawyers who opposed the recent cessation of transportation of criminals to Australia. Garroting could have been an otherwise innocuous robbery-type crime, less prevalent and no more violent than being punched or hit on the head and robbed.

Rather violent muggings were common, yet there were no "thumped on the head and knocked out" panics. There were no "punched in the face and robbed" panics. It was only, weirdly specifically, this chokehold form of mugging that became sensationalized, with the newspapers convincing the public that garroters were hiding around every corner and attacking with great regularity. The political machinations behind the garroting panic were almost as sinister as the crime itself.

What the general public did not realize was that these horror stories of strangulation attacks, though they did occur here and there, were fed to the newspapers by lawyers and politicians with the aim of convincing the public to support the passage of harsh laws that would allow transportation of criminals to labor camps in Australia to continue. These lawyers and politicians held interests in mining operations in Australia, and what better way to make optimal profit from mining than to use a free criminal labor force? With the cessation of transportation laws, that free labor force dried up. Miners would have to be paid, biting into the companies' bottom line. If new laws could be enacted to provide a fresh supply of convicts, the mines could chug along with maximal profit margins.

Now, what kind of crime could justify transportation? Murderers were typically hanged, so no point in sensationalizing murders. How about something just short of murder, though? Something heinous enough to warrant extremely harsh punishment but not the death penalty. Strangulation crimes, that's the ticket! We need criminals convicted of brutally attacking and choking out their victims; victims of high society, no less, and not to the point of death, but enough to incapacitate and cause terror. Lawyers seized upon every report of these choking-robberies and fed them to the papers, sensationalizing the details and whipping up fear.

The panic was some years in the making. In November 1856, Punch reported, "We have to announce that a large and sudden rise has taken place in the price of dogs. The great prevalence of garotte robberies is creating an enormous demand for those faithful and courageous animals." The following month, Punch published a lengthy article describing in detail the garroting mugging of the Hon. Mr. Lillipot of Belgravia, stating "this diabolical mode of attack appears to be on the increase." The article continues: "When about to turn the corner of a street, about a hundred yards from his own door, Mr. Lillipot felt a sudden compression of the throat; his eyes saw double; his head turned round and he fell upon the pavement, without even the presence of mind or the power to cry 'Police!' In this state, it is supposed the unfortunate gentleman must have lain for upwards of two hours...."

The Punch article ends, rather tellingly: "Of course, vulgar assaults we must, from time to time, always expect; but, when the Garotte enters the bosom of a nobleman's family, it is high time for the laws to better themselves." And so, as early as 1856, the political scheme which would culminate in widespread panic in 1862, followed by the passage of laws specifically targeting garroters, is set in motion.

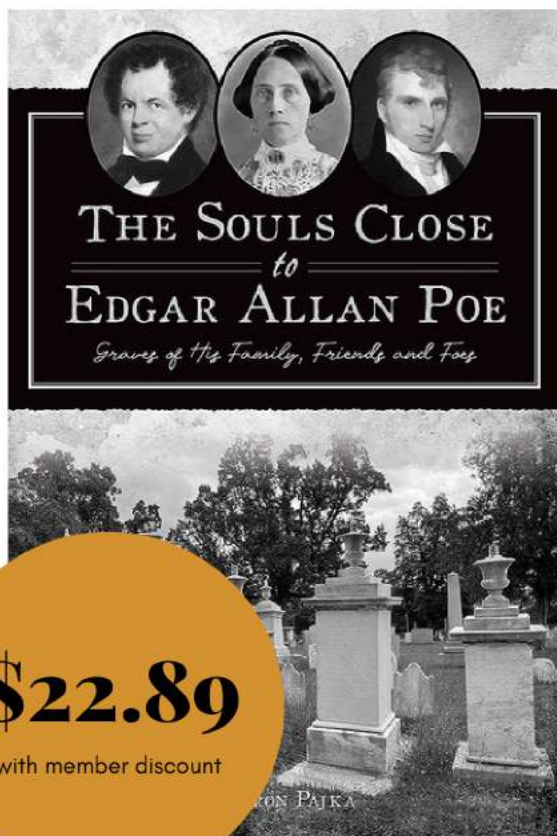


On July 17, 1862, a Member of Parliament, Hugh Pilkington, was choked and mugged in broad daylight in a fashionable part of London. The incident was widely reported in newspapers such as the Sun, The Times, and the Observer. It appears that this garroting attack was the straw that broke the camel's back. After half a decade of hyperbolic reports about the increase and brutality of this type of crime against those highest members of society, this latest report touched off a moral panic. Respectable Victorian society demanded harsh laws against these brutal garroters, and the lawyers and politicians finally got their wish.

In 1863, the British government introduced the "Garroters Act." Actually, they introduced the "Act for the Better Prevention and Punishment of Aggravated Assaults upon Persons," but we'll just go with the Garroters Act to save space in this article. This legislation imposed harsh penalties, including transportation or imprisonment with hard labor, for individuals convicted of garroting offenses. Coincidentally (or not!), numerous mugging/robbery crimes that did not involve any form of choking were categorized as garroting offenses. You tripped a drunken M.P. and relieved him of his gold watch? Congratulations, you're a garroter. Off to Australia with you!

With the passage of the Garroting Act, public outcry diminished, and respectable Victorians turned their attentions back to important things like the latest French fashions and how to preserve lark's tongue in aspic. In March 1864, Punch reported: "A stop seems to have been put pretty nearly, for the present, to garotte robberies by the recent Act which punishes them with whipping in addition to penal servitude. Since the enactment of that statute, we have heard very little of them."

The Garroting Panic was a period marked by fear and trepidation as the city streets became the stage for violent attacks nearly 30 years before Jack the Ripper sent shockwaves through Victorian London. The reports of this mid-century wave of garroting crimes led to increased public concerns about personal safety and demands for stronger law enforcement measures. Ultimately, the Garroting Panic serves as a stark reminder of the complexities of urbanization, political exploitation of crime, and the efforts to maintain order during a transformative era in London's history.



GIFTSHOP HIGHLIGHT

The Souls Close to Edgar Allen Poe by author Sharon Pajka will be available during our member event on October 6th. Come meet the author and talk about all things Poe! The book will be available in our gift shop after the event - we want to give our members first dibs on this awesome read!

The Hunter Foundation
Hunter House Victorian Museum
240 W Freemason St.
Norfolk, VA 23510

Open for Tours April - December

Touring Hours:

Wednesday-Saturday:

Guided Tours: 12pm & 2pm

Self-Guided Tours 11AM, 1PM, & 3PM

The museum is closed on Sunday,
Monday, Tuesday, and major holidays.

Admission Rates:

FREE! Donations greatly appreciated