



A Place for Today

Benjamin Franklin House opened to the public for the first time on Franklin's 300th birthday in January 2006. This precious heritage asset – the world's only remaining Franklin residence – has been brought back to its 18th century lustre as a dynamic museum and educational facility.

The Historical Experience uses the historic spaces where so much took place as stage – blending live interpretation, leading edge sound, lighting, and visual projection – to tell the rich story of Franklin in London in his own words.

The Student Science Centre inspires young people through hands-on experiments from Franklin's London years. Franklin translated scientific inquisitiveness into useful devices like the lightning rod, making positive and lasting contributions in science.

The Robert H. Smith Scholarship Centre is a focal point in Europe for study of Franklin and the myriad subjects with which he is associated, featuring a full set of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin catalogued by Yale University, as well as an active symposia programme.

"A Grade I-listed building, beautifully restored.... It's a short, intense experience.... You'll come away with a strong sense of the man and the times in which he lived."

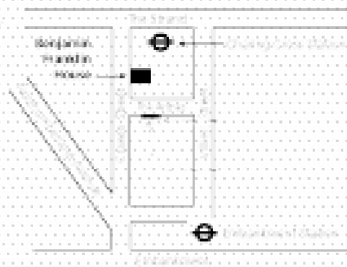
**** Time Out

Opening Hours

Historical Experience:
Wednesday – Sunday:
12.00, 1pm, 2pm, 3.15pm & 4.15pm

For tickets visit www.BenjaminFranklinHouse.org, call the booking line on 0207 925 1405 or visit our box office 10.30am - 5pm Monday & Wednesday - Sunday.

Tuesdays we are closed for education groups.
Scholarship Centre and Student Science Centre:
By appointment



Donations – Become a Friend

Donations to Benjamin Franklin House ensure the future of the building and its important aims. Donations of £25 and up qualify for the Benjamin Franklin House Friends programme with numerous benefits. See our contact details below for further information.

Volunteer

Volunteers are essential to the Benjamin Franklin House Historical Experience and other activities. Please be in touch and get involved.

Venue Hire

Book Benjamin Franklin House for exclusive entertaining, lectures, private dining, wedding receptions or for filming and photography. Contact us for further information.

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Benjamin Franklin House Bringing History to Life

"I have given a loose to imagination"
Benjamin Franklin



Spotlight on the Historical Experience: See Where History Comes to Life

The Historical Experience stands alone among attractions in its 'museum as theatre' approach, setting a new standard for historical interpretation.

Britain's first Historical Experience appeals to all the senses and all ages. Visitors gain a sense of the complexity of the man and the times in which he lived:

- Food, health, botany, and daily living in the basement kitchen
- Public and personal relationships, musical inventions and political tension on the ground floor
- Scientific work, political triumphs and woes, and a hurried return to America in the face of the looming War of Independence on the first floor

Emmy-award winning actor Peter Coyote is the voice of Benjamin Franklin and Academy Award-nominated actress Imelda Staunton is Margaret Stevenson, Franklin's landlady during his 16 years at Craven Street. The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) provided consultation on the script.

The Historical Experience removes the traditional distance between visitor and history – bringing the pivotal Age of the Enlightenment to life.



A Place for History

For nearly sixteen years between 1757 and 1775, Dr. Benjamin Franklin – scientist, diplomat, philosopher, inventor, US Founding Father and more – called 36 Craven Street in London home.

During this intense period, his main occupation as Colonial agent was mediating unrest between Britain and America. Though ultimately unsuccessful, he planted seeds of a special relationship that continues to be a source of strength for both nations.

During his London tenure Franklin was also Postmaster for the Colonies, pursued science (the energy-saving Franklin stove, daylight savings time, the Gulf Stream and designs for the lightning rod); health (inoculation, air baths, cures for the common cold); music (the glass armonica for which Mozart and Beethoven composed) and letters (articles, epitaphs, and his witty Craven Street Gazette) – all while forging a hearty social life and close friendships with leading figures of the day.

The Craven Street bones found during conservation feature in the basement. They are remnants from the anatomy school run by a member of Franklin's London household.

Rescued from dereliction, 36 Craven Street's conserved interiors now prove a graceful backdrop for the House's unique offerings. Built circa 1730, the work-a-day Georgian building holds a Grade I architectural listing for its extensive original features including: 14 fireplaces, ceilings, panelling, shutters, floors and a central staircase which Franklin claimed to use for daily exercise!

“Faith is then the ground floor, hope is up one pair of stairs ...”
Benjamin Franklin



Franklin and London – Britain and America Ties that Bind

Benjamin Franklin House stands in the heart of London – steps from historic Trafalgar Square, the bustling Strand and Charing Cross, and the murky Thames. This lovely Georgian townhouse was Franklin's base of operations: here he took centre stage during a fascinating and turbulent epoch in British and American history.

- 1706 Franklin born in Boston
- 1729 Becomes owner and publisher of Pennsylvania Gazette
- 1730 Enters common law marriage with Deborah Read
- 1741 Designs Franklin Stove
- 1753 Appointed Postmaster for America
- 1757 Takes lodgings at 36 Craven Street to negotiate Colonial interests
- 1760 George III ascends throne
- 1761 Invents Glass Armonica
- 1763 End of Seven Years War (Europe and beyond)
- 1765 Faces debate over Stamp Act
- 1768 British troops land in Boston
- 1771 Begins Autobiography
- 1774 Attempts final peace discussions between Britain and America
- 1775 Returns to America – outbreak of the American Revolution
- 1776 Signs Declaration of Independence
- 1777 Begins residence in France representing new United States
- 1783 Signs Treaty of Paris between America and Britain ending the Revolutionary War
- 1787 Signs US Constitution
- 1790 Franklin dies in Philadelphia