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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Behind Every Door Lies a Secret: London Shh... Celebrates the Lives of London's Historic Buildings

Shh! There's a new organisation in London planning to shed light on some of the capital's hidden gems. London Shh... (Small historic houses) launches in June 2009 as part of the Story of London, a month-long celebration of the city's past, present and future organised by the Greater London Authority. With an exhibition and events funded by London Museums Hub, the fascinating lives of these buildings and their residents will come alive on 27 and 28 June, as tourists and Londoners alike will be let in on historical and architectural secrets off the beaten trail of London's heritage.

London Shh... is a group of small historic houses who have banded together to fight the recession through joint marketing opportunities, increasing visitors and targeting new audiences and sharing ideas. A cross-London collective, the group currently comprises: Benjamin Franklin House in Charing Cross, Burgh House and the Freud Museum in Hampstead, Dr Johnson's House off Fleet Street, Handel House in Mayfair and the William Morris Society at Kelmscott House in Hammersmith. The buildings form part of London's diverse architecture, and their famous inhabitants have contributed to London and world history in a wide variety of

ways – from Handel's concerts in Covent Garden and William Morris' arts and crafts movement to Dr Johnson's famous dictionary and Franklin's de facto first American Embassy. All six houses are open to celebrate the Lives of Buildings weekend, with a variety of special events dedicated to their famous residents.

Quotes: **London Mayor Boris Johnson** says:

'One of the aims of the Story of London is to raise the profile of local museums and libraries around the capital, so we're delighted to be working with the London Museums Hub and Shh... Small Historic Houses project. As well as offering a snapshot of the city's different architectural styles, these unique buildings also give an insight into the lives of famous Londoners and the different ways they have contributed to London's story and world history.'

For more information on London Shh... and images, please contact Sarah Chaney at Benjamin Franklin House on 020 7839 2008 or Sarah@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org
Additional press information about the Story of London is available by contacting Ben McKnight at the GLA on 020 7983 4071, or email communitydesk@london.gov.uk.

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Notes to Editors

1. London Shh... exists to improve access to London's lesser known historic houses; to diversify and increase their audiences; and to share skills, knowledge and resources amongst its group members. A new logo and basic website is available at www.LondonShh.org.uk, with a full website and launch party later in the year. The website will contain events and visitor information for all six Shh... venues, as well as information on special Shh... events and an opportunity to sign up for the newsletter.
2. The Story of London is a month-long celebration of the city's past, present and future, which takes place throughout the whole of June 2009. Organised by the Greater London Authority in partnership with a host of organisations across the capital, it is aimed at tourists and Londoners alike, with events and activities in every borough. More information can be found at www.london.gov.uk/storyoflondon.

3. Events on 27/28 June, and House details, run as follows. More information, and other events during June 2009, can be found on the individual websites.

Benjamin Franklin House

Franklin, Hewson and Life at 36 Craven Street

Saturday 27/Sunday 28 June

Historical Experience Shows start at 12, 1, 2, 3:15 and 4:15pm

Explore Georgian, Grade I listed Benjamin Franklin House, Franklin's only remaining home. Built circa 1730, it is remarkable for its original features. The Historical Experience uses the rooms where so much took place as staging for a drama on Franklin's turbulent London years. For the Lives of Buildings weekend, visitors will also view the House's upper floors, usually closed to the public, fully experiencing this eccentric building, whose beautiful conservation has been recognised by the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Georgian Group. They will discover more about other Craven Street residents like William and Polly Hewson and Franklin's landlady Margaret Stevenson. The basement seminar room, the starting point for the show, will also hold a small exhibition, funded by London Museums Hub, dedicated to all six London Shh... venues. A guided walk around Franklin's Westminster will also take place on Saturday 6 June.

Admission: £7 full price, £5 concessions, free for under 16s

www.BenjaminFranklinHouse.org

Burgh House

Special Exhibition: John Gay in Hampstead

Sunday 28 June 12 – 5pm (Buttery Café open daily)

Burgh House was built in 1704 during Queen Anne's reign. Its first occupants were Henry and Hannah Sewell, and since then it has been home to many notable inhabitants, including Hampstead Wells Chief Physician Dr William Gibbons, Rudyard Kipling's daughter, Elsie Bambridge and for a short time in the 1800's the Royal East Middlesex Militia. During Story of London the house will feature a photographic exhibition of post-war Hampstead and Highgate by John Gay (1909 -1999).

Lives of Buildings Architectural Walks

For both walks meet at Burgh House

Saturday 27 June at 2.30pm

Alleys and Lanes of Hampstead

Explore the architecture and history of this fascinating hill village concealed within its charming backstreets with guide Marilyn Greene

Sunday 28 June at 2.30pm

Modernist Hampstead

Look at some of the stunning buildings from the Modernist movement of architecture in Hampstead, from Erno Goldfinger's house in Willow Road to the Isokon flats in Belsize Park.

Admission: Free; tickets for walks £8 (reservations and tickets on 020 7431

0144 or info@burghhouse.org.uk)

www.BurghHouse.org.uk

Dr Johnson's House

The House of Words

Saturday 27 June (closed Sunday), 11 – 5:30pm,

Special curator-led tour at 2pm (free with admission)

Built in 1700, 17 Gough Square was a home and workplace for Samuel Johnson from 1748-1759, and it was here that he compiled the first comprehensive English Dictionary. To celebrate the tercentenary of Johnson's birth, Dr Johnson's House has commissioned 7 artists to create installations in the House, drawing inspiration from his life and the historic environment. The House of Words runs until 29 August.

Admission: £4.50/£3.50 (£1.50 children)

www.drjohnsonshouse.org

Freud Museum

Saturday 27/Sunday 28 June, 12 – 5pm

The Freud Museum, at 20 Maresfield Gardens in Hampstead, was the home of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, and his family when they escaped the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938. It remained the family home until Anna Freud, his youngest daughter, herself a pioneer of child psychoanalysis died in 1982. The centrepiece of the museum is Freud's library and study, preserved just as it was during his lifetime and containing the iconic psychoanalytic couch on which his patients reclined.

Admission: £5/£3

www.freud.org.uk

Handel House

Handel Reveal'd

Saturday 27 June, 10 – 6pm, Sunday 28 June, 12 – 6pm

The Handel House Museum was home to the baroque composer George Frideric Handel from 1723 until his death in 1759. This landmark address is where Handel composed some of the greatest music in history including Messiah, Zadok the Priest and Music for the Royal Fireworks, and died on 14 April 1759. Handel Reveal'd investigates many aspects of Handel's life, including his finances, his love of food and his health, drawing on objects from the Museum's own collection and significant loans from national museums and private collections. This major exhibition is part of the Museum's Handel 2009 programme of activities to commemorate 250th anniversary of Handel's death.

£5/£4.50 (£2 children)

www.handelhouse.org

William Morris Society

Kelmscott House

Saturday 27 June, 2 – 5pm

Special curator-led tour at 1.30pm

Kelmscott House was William Morris's home between 1878 and 1896 and it was this Georgian riverside house that inspired Morris to create many of his best-loved designs. It was also during his time at Kelmscott House that Morris established the Hammersmith carpet workshops, founded the Hammersmith Socialist Society and began the Kelmscott Press. The lower floors are now the headquarters of the William Morris Society and house the Society's collection. Visitors can see original textiles and wallpapers on display, see the Coach

House where the Socialist meetings took place, and view demonstrations of Morris's printing press. Events and lectures take place throughout the year.
Admission: Free
http://www.morrissociety.org/Kelmscott_House.html