

Second Quarter 2010



From left: Rock star Jon Bon Jovi plays the Benjamin Franklin House glass armonica; Franklin's Parlour dressed for an exclusive June corporate event; children from London's St Clement Dane Primary share their Franklin-inspired inventions.

"Your mention of the summer house, brings fresh to my Mind all the Pleasure I enjoy'd in the sweet Retreat at Twyford, the Hours of agre[e]able and instructive Conversation with the amiable Family at Table, with its Father alone; the delightful Walks in the Garden & neighbouring Grounds" – Benjamin Franklin to Georgiana Shipley, 1781

Greetings,

While the American Revolution wore on, writing from Paris, Benjamin Franklin recalled with considerable fondness the summer days he had spent at the Twyford home of his friend, Bishop Jonathan Shipley, in the heart of the Berkshire countryside. He relished the family's company, and it was in their Summer House that he penned the most significant sections of his unfinished autobiography. After one visit he noted, "I now breathe with Reluctance the Smoke of London, when I think of the sweet Air of Twyford." In response to the pollution he encountered in the capital, Franklin continued his worked at Craven Street on fuel efficient stoves. In June, during our annual Science Fair, children followed his example by exploring greener fuel alternatives. The winning project, from a group of pupils at St. Clement Danes Primary School, was a spherical solar panel whose unique design the judges felt could maximise energy generation through its larger surface area.

During Franklin's tenure many famous visitors came to call, including those from America. He and the House are still a draw today. In the quarter, we were lucky to have musician [Jon Bon Jovi and his wife Dorothea pay a visit](#). As Jon noted, "Seeing Benjamin Franklin's house in London is a treat to anyone who is a fan of the great man or just a fan of his great accomplishments. I remain one of his biggest fans...." Jon tried his hand at the House's glass armonica and it wasn't long before he had the beginnings of a song!

Read on for more House news in the period.

Education

*The Annual [Benjamin Franklin House Science Fair](#) took place in June at St. Clements Danes Primary School. Children were asked to focus on either green energy or safer headphones to protect hearing. Judging the competition were Rob Baker of the Royal Society of Arts, where Franklin was the first international member, Catherine Bennett from the Noise Abatement Society's 'Love your Ears' campaign aimed at protecting child hearing, and Dianne Cran of the Royal Institute.

*The Annual [Benjamin Franklin House Science Day](#) was held in May at London's Regent's Hall, with 161 staff and students from four London schools (St. John's, Surrey Square Juniors, Lycee Francais Charles de Gaulle and St. Paul's Tower Hamlets) engaged in a morning of Franklin-inspired science.

* 13 schools across London received a visit by our Education Manager, who shared Ben's Traveling Suitcase with its tales of Craven Street science and invention.

*We provided a special lecture series on the Craven Street bones to [Into University](#), which offers long-term academic support to inner city young people at local learning centres.

*In June we launched the first part of our new Sister Schools programme; children from one of our partner London schools, Surrey Square Junior, shared information on their class and environs with the Benjamin Franklin School of the Bronx, New York.

*To find out more about educational visits (each Tuesday the House is closed to the public and only open to local schools) email Education@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org

Events

included

*Franklin and the Iroquois Nation: 28 June. Sally Brewer from the House team discussed the impact of the Iroquois Nation of North America on Franklin and his contemporaries.

*Musical Soiree with the Concordia Foundation: 3 June. In keeping with Franklin's love of music, a string quartet entertained with Franklin-era pieces, including the Benjamin Franklin Suite, said to be written by the great man himself. Listen to an excerpt of the latter performed on the night [here](#).

*Georgian Sports Day: 1 June. The summer sports day featured 18th century games at the House – from Blind Man's Buff and marbles, to quoits and leapfrog.

*Caleb Whitefoord 1734-1810, The Man who made Peace with North America: 17 May. Dr David Allan, Royal Society of Arts historian and Honorary President of the William Shipley Group for RSA History highlighted Franklin's friendship with his Craven Street neighbor, Caleb Whitefoord, who like Franklin helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris which ended the Revolutionary War.

*Benefit Concert for Benjamin Franklin House – 18th Century Music and Beyond: 17 May. At London's Steiner Theatre in Regent's Park, talented young soprano, Judith Charron, was joined by Paul Vialard on cello, and Andrew Robinson on piano, for an evening of 18th century music and more, including songs by Handel, Verdi, and Debussy, as well as Gluck and Donizetti, who both composed for Franklin's ingenious glass armonica.

*Museums and Galleries at Night, Late Night Historical Experience: 15-16 May. Visitors saw the Historical Experience at night – live interpretation and sound and visual projection revealed the uncertainty and excitement of Franklin's London years.

Upcoming Events

including

*Festival of British Archaeology, Tuesday 27 July, 11am and 2pm. Children will discover the House's fascinating archaeological history. Led by archaeologist and House Education Manager, Sally Brewer. £5 per child, free for adults.

*Georgian Life Revealed! Every Tuesday in August, 11am and 2pm. Mrs Polly Hewson, daughter of Franklin's landlady, will share details of everyday life in Georgian London and the grander events in Franklin's London household. £5 per child, free for adults.

*London Open House Weekend, Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 September. This annual event opens the doors of some of London's most interesting buildings to the public, including Grade I, 1730s Benjamin Franklin House. Guided tours will take place throughout the day. Free - booking required.

*Annual Symposium in association with the Eccles Centre and Professor Brian Cox, Monday 20 September, 6.30pm. Professor Brian Cox, particle physicist and Royal Society Research Fellow, has a pulse on modern physics as well its historic roots. LOCATION: The British Library Conference Centre, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. £8/£5 Friends and Concessions.

*Lady Reid Lecture: Franklin and Interiors, Wednesday 29 September, 6.30pm. We can connect Franklin to nearly any subject – here his interest in interior design, with a concentration on his Craven Street years. £5/3.50 Friends and Concessions.

To book for all events call +44 (0) 20 7839 2006 or email Info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org

Support for the House

*In the last quarter, Benjamin Franklin House gratefully received a major grant from the Smith Family Foundation as well as support for conservation from the Leche Trust and the Aim Conservation Pilgrim Trust.

Visit <http://www.eventinternet.com/benjaminfranklinhouse/content/donations/index.asp> to make an online donation.

*Alongside the US Benjamin Franklin House Foundation, we launched the World of Possibilities endowment campaign in 2009 with a long-term goal of £4 million endowment to expand our educational mission and to provide the House with a more secure financial future. In February, we submitted a request to the National Endowment for the Humanities for support of the campaign; please consider getting involved, email Director@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org.

*Our [Friends programme](#) is essential – and growing! You can [become a Friend](#) with a gift of £25 and above and receive numerous benefits, including free entry to the House.

*You can aid Benjamin Franklin House at no cost when shopping online with over 600 popular retailers, including Amazon, and many more: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/benjaminfranklin>. You can also raise funds for the House when you search the Web with easysearch: <http://benjaminfranklin.easysearch.org.uk!>

Benjamin Franklin House in the News

*Benjamin Franklin House was mentioned on the [Glen Beck](#) programme during an interview with House friend, James Srodes, author of Franklin: America's Essential Founding Father!

*[Visit London](#) described Benjamin Franklin House as a “fantastic museum” in an article about famous London dwellers!

*Bill Bryson discusses Franklin's time in London and his practice of taking air baths in his latest book At Home: A Short History of Private Life!

*You can follow Benjamin Franklin House on Twitter; [sign up](#) and follow us! Become one of our Facebook friends at www.facebook.com/benjaminfranklinhouse!

We are enjoying a record summer – sun, warmth and healthy visitor numbers. We wish you all good things this season as well.

Thank you as always for your continued interest and support,

Márcia

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