

Dear Friends,

We are most grateful for your support of Benjamin Franklin House over so many years and wanted to include you in the run-up to opening Ben's only surviving home to the public as a dynamic museum and educational facility next January in time for his 300th birthday!

A quick reminder of our guiding objectives:

- * Create a living museum for public benefit - a 'museum as theatre' Historical Experience - which brings history and education to life for approximately 30,000 visitors annually
- * Establish an educational facility - the Student Science Centre - that emphasises reasoning and self-motivation encouraging Franklin's boundless spirit of enquiry for approximately 4000 children annually
- * Forge Anglo-American understanding and ties between inner city London children and their American counterparts through the Benjamin Franklin Science Fair outreach programme targeting 4 London boroughs by 2006
- * Institute research facilities as a focal point in Europe for Franklin and Franklin-related scholarship - the Scholarship Centre - reaching 500 adult learners annually and involving the Franklin-founded University of Pennsylvania and UK-based organisations and the Marshall Scholars programme

And a brief summary of what we've done over the last 12 months:

- * Made great fundraising progress - 2004 saw the award of a nearly £1 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the culmination of a year's work, which has spurred additional generous contributions toward outstanding project costs. Fundraising continues apace toward the completion of the project and the creation of a £1 million endowment fund to further the aims of the House and to secure its future
- * The 2003/2004 Benjamin Franklin House Science Fair - reached over 200 students bringing together young people from Tower Hamlets, King's Cross and Westminster schools with their counterparts at the American Community School in Surrey to work on such Franklin-related questions as: 'How do you get more heat from less fuel?' Students developed over 50 projects touching on such Franklin themes as electricity, weather/meteorology, hydrodynamics, measurement, and wind energy
- * Developed ties with the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary - based in Philadelphia, the Tercentenary has been charged by the US Congress with organising the official US national celebration of Franklin's birth. We are now

developing joint activities in London for 2006 and beyond including lectures, exhibitions, and other events, involving other UK partners like the British Library, who hold Franklin artefacts

* Held interesting events - a London gallery in summer 2004 was the site for a joint Franklin Armonica concert, featuring armonica musician Thomas Bloch, and a photography exhibition, showcasing images of 36 Craven Street by Benjamin Franklin House scholar, Michael De Guzman; last year, the British Consul General of Chicago opened his home for a reception celebrating the project

* Strengthened our relationship with the University of Pennsylvania - Franklin historian Lady Joan Reid and I delivered lectures at Penn to the school's Benjamin Franklin scholars, hosted by Professor Daniel K. Richter, Director of Penn's McNeil Center for Early American Studies

* Hosted another thought-provoking Benjamin Franklin House Symposium at the Royal Society of Arts last autumn - 'Benjamin Franklin and the Transatlantic Relationship in Global Affairs,' timed just prior to the US presidential election, looked at the historical development, current status, and likely evolution of the strategic partnership between Britain and America. Speakers included media personality and business leader, Loyd Grossman; Director of Markets and Exchanges, Financial Services Authority, Gay Huey Evans; Chargé de Affaires, US Embassy London, David Johnson; Chairman of the Royal Society of Arts, Sir Paul Judge; Director of the Eccles Centre for American Studies, British Library, Dr. Philip Davies; London Bureau Chief, International Herald Tribune, Eric Pfanner; and Professor Robert Worcester, founder of MORI

This month our project management team (which includes our Chairman Sir Bob Reid; our Treasurer Anne Keigher; our Quantity Surveyor, Mike Burke; our Architect, Patrick Dillon; our Project Coordinator, Bob Sweeting and myself) assembled to further develop the work plan and cash flow analysis for the year ahead. On the 12th of January our technical integrators, Can Factory, organised an exciting meeting with the designers of the Historical Experience, Event Communications, and all those who will help bring it to fruition including the script writer, and our lighting and sound designers. We went room by room to explore the multimedia requirements of each of the spaces.

In order to officially begin on-site work we must gain permission from the Heritage Lottery Fund and this month we took important legal steps to do that; we anticipate sign-off over the course of the next month. Our pro bono legal counsel, Hamid Rashidmanesh of Morrison & Foerster has been indispensable here.

We had a small gathering in the House earlier this week for a number of supporters, including Lisa Lavia of Marsh who will be lending pro bono PR assistance and Bryan Alexander, London Bureau Chief of People Magazine.

Going forward my monthly message will be brief but will hopefully convey the energy and excitement of the countdown to opening Benjamin Franklin House to the public, for the first time, as a space which makes history and science come to life, through the indomitable character of Ben Franklin, for generations to come.

With best wishes,

Márcia

Dr. M. Balisciano
Director
Benjamin Franklin House
36 Craven Street
London WC2N 5NF
020 7930 9121 - telephone
020 7930 9124 - facsimile