

30 June 2005

Dear Friends,

In one June of his long years, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) asked, 'Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of.' We have, in fact, made every minute count this month; even today when we had difficulty getting to our office for all the scaffolding now being erected at the rear of the building! Wallis, our primary conservation contractors, have been hard at work, most recently on ceiling repairs. The House has been abuzz with activity and specialists.

The Franklin quote above is from a June 1746 edition of Poor Richard's Almanack. This series, which Franklin wrote and published between 1733 and 1758, can be considered the first American best-seller. It is filled with astute homespun wisdom and many aphorisms still widely quoted. Today, while visiting the British Library to view their Franklin collection, Dr. Matthew Shaw allowed me hold an original Poor Richard's from 1752 - a special year for Franklin's calendar book when Britain and her colonies changed to the Gregorian calendar (from the Julian) to better sync with the true rotation of the earth. This correction of an 11-day discrepancy meant the day after 2 September 1752 became 14 September.

Franklin punned, "...The King and Parliament have thought fit to alter our year, by taking eleven days out of September 1752, and directing us to begin our account for the future on the first of January.Wishing withal, according to ancient Custom, that this New Year (which is indeed a New Year, such an one as we never saw before, and shall never see again) may be a happy year to all my kind Readers."

Along with the opening of Benjamin Franklin House next 17 January for Franklin's 300th birthday, we are working with the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary in Philadelphia, and other colleagues, on Six Degrees of Benjamin Franklin: special events and a trail throughout the UK to Franklin-related sites. One of the primary stop-offs will be the British Library in central London next May, when Dr. Shaw organises an exhibit of their Franklin materials.

*** Spotlight on the Scholarship Centre: The Intellectual Heart of Benjamin Franklin House**

The Scholarship Centre will be located on the top floor of the House and be a hub for study of the many subjects Franklin pursued. Thanks to support from the US Embassy London, scholars will have access to online services and the nearly 40 volumes of Franklin's writings annotated by our friends at Yale University's Papers of Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin was largely self-taught and as a boy was an extensive reader of Bunyan, Defoe, Addison, Locke and others. At 12 he was apprenticed as a printer to his brother James. By the time he was 16 he was contributing to his James' newspaper, The Courant, under the pseudonym of Silence Dogood. Among his early publishing ventures was the *Philadelphische Zeitung*, America's first German-language newspaper (1732). During his years in London, Franklin published his autobiography (1771), still hailed as a classic of modern literature.

A key initiative of the Scholarship Centre is our annual Symposium at the Royal Society of Arts, an event which brings together leading names in such diverse fields as science, politics and business to discuss issues inspired by Franklin's life and work. Themes of previous Symposiums have been „Franklin and the Media's Role in Global Affairs“ and „Benjamin Franklin and the Human Genome.“ This year's theme is „Benjamin Franklin, Design and Innovation“ and will take place on Thursday 27 October, 4-9 pm. Email BenjaminFranklinHouse@msn.com to reserve a place.

*** Other news**

Grant from National Grid Transco

Dr. Maeve Chappell in charge of Communications and Social Policy for leading energy company, National Grid Transco (NGT), has announced NGT will provide a grant of £20,000 to bring a Benjamin Franklin House Education Officer on board! The post is key as the successful candidate will be responsible for developing our Student Science Centre's vibrant outreach programme aimed at inner-city schools.

Visit from Benjamin Franklin House Foundation President, David Brownwood

David Brownwood, President of Benjamin Franklin House Foundation, a US non-profit 501(c)(3) organisation, set up to advance the aims of Benjamin Franklin House, stopped by 36 Craven Street during a visit to London to see the progress underway. David, who has been tireless in his support of the project, is a distinguished member of New York law firm, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP.

Benjamin Franklin House Foundation allows US donors to make tax-deductible contributions. The Foundation agreed a gift of \$30,000 to assist with on-going operations before the close of last year. To make a contribution to the Benjamin Franklin House Foundation email BenjaminFranklinHouse@msn.com - this will help with the outstanding \$100,000 Challenge (if we raise \$100,000 in US contributions, our leading US donor will match this with an additional \$100,000)!

*** Preview**

Website

We have been working on a new Benjamin Franklin House website and I will pass along the link in next month's countdown email.

Opening Gala

We will send out invitations before long to our Opening Gala Celebration on 17 January 2006 - when Franklin turns 300 and his London home, where he lived for the better part of sixteen years on the eve of the American Revolution, will open to the public for the first time as a dynamic museum and educational facility. The Gala will take place at London's royal palace, The Banqueting House, with senior representatives of the British and American governments. We are seeking sponsors to help underwrite the cost of this prestigious and historic event. Email BenjaminFranklinHouse@msn.com to find out more.

I promised to provide negotiated rates for nearby hotels, should you need accommodation in London during the Gala. Here are two - Royal Horseguards Hotel, from £129.00 per room per night exclusive of VAT, contact: Stephanie Roper, stephanie.roper@thistle.co.uk, www.thistlehotels.com <<http://www.thistlehotels.com>> ; Trafalgar Hilton, £235.00 per room per night inclusive of VAT and full English breakfast, contact: Mark Whittle, Mark.Whittle@hilton.com, www.thetrafalgar.com <<http://www.thetrafalgar.com>>

A Growing Network

For those receiving this communication for the first time, we can share the previous six (!) update emails. Also, if you know of someone who might be interested in keeping up-to-date on developments at Benjamin Franklin House, let us know and we'll add them to our distribution list.

Happy Fourth of July

The Benjamin Franklin House team will have a display at the annual Independence Day celebrations at the US Ambassador's central London residence. With more than 1000 due to be in attendance, this will be a great opportunity to raise awareness of the exciting developments at the House and our upcoming opening.

Thank you, as always, for your kind consideration.

With all best wishes,

Márcia

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