

## Benjamin Franklin House

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**From:** Benjamin Franklin House [info@benjaminfranklinhouse.org]

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From left: Nearly 1000 people visited during September's London Open House weekend; the Craven Street bones feature in a special exhibition on Medical London; Scientist Dr. Richard Horton explored Franklin and the Globalisation of Science at the 2008 Annual Symposium

### Benjamin Franklin House eGazette 2008 – 3rd Quarter

*"Wisdom...sees the Welfare of the Parts in the Prosperity of the Whole"* - Benjamin Franklin, 1768

Greetings,

Franklin's words, written at Craven Street, on the welfare of the parts in the prosperity of the whole has almost universal application, but is certainly true at Benjamin Franklin House. By the close of the third quarter we reached the milestone of over 20,000 visitors, comprised of nearly 16,000 who saw the ground-breaking Historical Experience, some 3000 children inspired by Franklin's London science in the Student Science Centre, and more than 1000 others who engaged with the many initiatives of the Robert H. Smith Scholarship Centre.

We are working hard to attract the next 20,000. Read on for how!

## Education

\*Each Tuesday the House is open free of charge to school groups, many from London's poorest neighbourhoods. We are now fully booked with educational visits through the close of the year. In addition, 20 schools and community groups have benefit so far in 2008 from Ben's Travelling Suitcase, a valise full of Franklin at Craven Street-related objects with corresponding activities delivered by the House's Education Manager.

\*In July we participated in National Archaeology Week. Children and their families were encouraged to become archeologists in order to uncover the rich history of the House and its inhabitants.

\*Students and parents had a chance over the summer to meet Polly Hewson, daughter of Franklin's landlady, to discover life in Georgian England. They also recreated one of the great inventor's experiments with the awesome power of lightning!

\*The Sir Bob Reid School Science Fund, in honour of our former Chairman's passion for education, recognises excellence in science teaching. In December, a gift of £250 will be awarded to Surrey Square School in support of their Musical Science Fair. Following in Franklin's footsteps, pupils have been considering the science and technology of musical instruments and devising their own creations.

## Events

\*Among the many events in the quarter, Franklin expert and Benjamin Franklin House Governor Joan Reid discussed Franklin and his female relationships, including with his Craven Street family of women. Her next talk is 4 December 2008 at 6.30pm on Franklin and Espionage: £5; £3 Friends and concessions; to book email [info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org](mailto:info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org).

\*In addition to September's successful London Open House Weekend when we provided free architectural tours of the House, we also participated during the month in Open Rehearsal, a city-wide arts and culture event giving Londoners the unique opportunity to experience theatre, music, and dance venues, with behind the scenes showings of the Historical Experience.

\*With the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library, the 2008 Benjamin Franklin House Symposium featured Dr. Richard Horton, editor of the Lancet, the number one global medical journal. Dr. Horton's theme was Benjamin Franklin and the globalisation of science. He highlighted the difference between today's science specialists and Franklin, whom he called the "ultimate diadact." He said the best science draws on the expertise of people in many institutions and countries, in line with Franklin's "seminal ideas of scientific association." He urged in the mode of Franklin, better conversation among all sides on challenging topics in science.

\*The October special exhibition with accompanying lectures, William Hewson and the Craven Street Bones, features extensive samples from the in-House anatomy school operated by William Hewson (husband to Franklin's Craven Street 'daughter,' Polly). The many human and animal remains on display were uncovered in the basement during conservation.

\*On 29 October 2008 in association with the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library, we will host a sold-out US presidential debate between the Chairs of

Republicans Abroad and Democrats Abroad; Sir Robert Worcester, founder of opinion research firm MORI, will be in the chair as representatives from the two parties spar on the merits of their respective candidates.

## **Benjamin Franklin House Foundation**

Benjamin Franklin House Foundation in the United States is an active and independent organisation - <http://www.bfhfoundation.org/> - formed to educate the public about the life and works of Benjamin Franklin, including by supporting the improvement, preservation and maintenance of 36 Craven Street. We are working together on a new Sister Schools initiative to link students from our London partner schools with their counterparts in the US so they can share information about themselves, their cultures, and studies.

## **Support for the House**

\*Over the quarter we garnered new grants from Ove Arup, Ernest Cook Trust, and the Coutts Charitable Trust. We have also secured an exciting grant from the US National Endowment, gaining designation as one of their We the People projects aimed at encouraging and strengthening the teaching, study and understanding of American history and culture.

\*The A World of Possibilities endowment campaign to secure the long-term future of the House and its educational aims is underway. The Honourary Co-Chairs are Sir Nigel Sheinwald, British Ambassador to the US and Robert Tuttle, US Ambassador to the Court of St James's. An Advisory Group has been established comprising 16 senators and congressmen and women, along with 16 members of Britain's House of Lords and House of Commons. An Educational Panel has also been established to enable scholastic leaders to lend their support to the campaign; see <http://www.benjaminfranklinhouse.org/site/sections/support/endowment.html>. US fundraising events will take place upcoming, including a reception hosted by the British Embassy on 10 December. To find out more email [Director@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org](mailto:Director@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org).

\*Support Benjamin Franklin House at no cost when Christmas shopping online with over 600 popular retailers, including Amazon, M&S, John Lewis, HMV, Play.com, and many more: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/benjaminfranklin>. You can also raise funds for the House when you search the Web with easysearch - the best results from Yahoo!, MSN Live Search and Ask.com in one simple search: <http://benjaminfranklin.easysearch.org.uk>.

## **2008 Benjamin Franklin House Literary Prize**

On Thanksgiving, 27 November, the winners of the 2008 Benjamin Franklin House Literary Prize will be announced. We will be awarding a top prize to both a professional and young writer for their essay on the theme of ethical journalism. Our partner, leading British newspaper, The Telegraph, will publish the winning pieces online.

## **Other House News**

\*The House was featured in The Guardian's 'Summer Days Out', a listing of the best things to do with children. The House also featured in the Sunday Times article 'Britain's Best Historic Days Out' over the summer. And Laura Porter on Ask.com's London Travel website - <http://golondon.about.com/od/thingstodoinlondon/fr/benfranklin.htm> - said of the Historical Experience, "it's an unusual and quirky way to explore the building and although I wasn't expecting to find it so good I haven't stopped telling people about it."

Wishing you a wonderful autumn,

Márcia

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