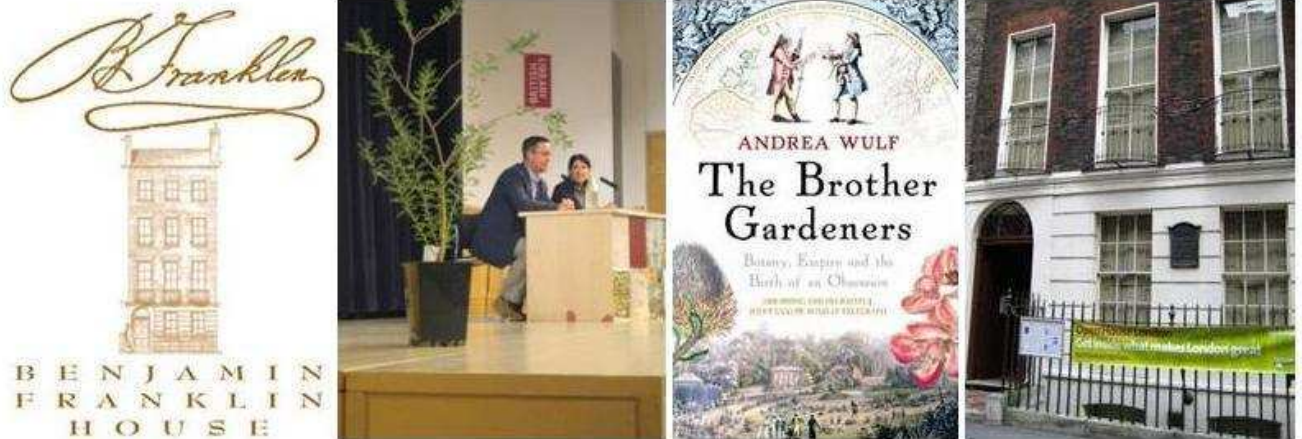


October 2009



In the quarter from left: Paul Smith, Director of Kew Garden's Millennium Seed Bank Project, responds to questions at the 2009 Symposium held in conjunction with the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library; Andrea Wulf discussed the roots of transatlantic botanical passions which Franklin helped spur; nearly 2000 people visited the House during 2009 London Open House Weekend

*"I leave Directions with Mrs. Stevenson to deliver you all the Massachusetts Papers, when you please to call for them. I am sorry that the Hurry of Preparing for my Voyage and the many Hindrances I have met with, prevented my meeting you...and conversing a little more on our Affairs before my Departure. ...I shall let you know how I find things in America. I may possibly return again in Autumn...." B Franklin, 19 March 1775*

Greetings,

Autumn has come to London, making the city as grey and rainy as it is wont to be. In the 1775 quote above, Franklin mentions an autumn return to the capital. It was penned from Craven Street to fellow Massachusetts agent, Arthur Lee, as Franklin made haste to return to Philadelphia with crisis looming between Crown and colonies – crisis he had unsuccessfully tried to avert. Perhaps he was optimistic that separation, by then inevitable, could be negotiated. Or perhaps he was simply hopeful he would return again to his treasured London household. Not until he was sailing mid-Atlantic would shots be fired in Lexington and Concord marking the start of a protracted Revolutionary War, which conspired to prevent his return in that or any future autumn.

But I think Franklin would be pleased to know that some 230 years after his exodus, thousands have come to Craven Street since opening on his 300th birthday in January 2006. By the close of the quarter we reached over 31,000 visitors, including nearly 5000 school children, who have discovered the richness of Franklin's London story through the Historical Experience, Student Science Centre, and Robert H. Smith Scholarship Centre.

This autumn we will be focusing on awarding the [2009 Literary Prize](#) in partnership with The Telegraph for the best interpretations of the Franklin quote,

"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." We will be undertaking front exterior works including tuckpointing and repainting (so far this year, specialists Holden Conservation have carried out stair and floor repairs where necessary, with repainting in the basement). We will also begin upgrades to the [Historical Experience](#), working with the original partners who brought the show to life, thanks to funding from the US Embassy London, the Fidelity Foundation, and Robert H. Smith.

## Education

\*Each Tuesday in August children had an Audience With Polly Hewson; Polly, the primary character on the Historical Experience, was the daughter of Franklin's landlady, who became a second daughter to Franklin. They could ask our Polly, played by one of three professional actresses, questions about life in the House and London during Franklin's long stay in the Age of the Enlightenment.

\*We are pleased to welcome Sally Brewer as our new Education Manager. Sally, who among other degrees holds a Masters in history, has overseen education at London's Fan Museum for the last two years, liaising with schools and community groups to provide outreach to children of different ages and abilities. For information about our educational offerings and to book school visits email [Education@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org](mailto:Education@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org).

## Events

Among other events in the quarter:

\*Our last comedy night on 22 July featured Robin Ince, who wove Franklin throughout an amusing monologue, in preparation for a run at the Edinburgh Festival which was pronounced a "great hour from a great performer" by the [Scotsman](#) newspaper.

\*The Benjamin Franklin House Annual Symposium on 9 September in association with the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library featured Paul Smith, Director of Kew Garden's [Millennium Seed Bank](#), in celebration of [Kew's 250th Anniversary](#). Among Franklin's many passions was botany. It was a passion he shared with his friend Joseph Banks, the gentleman botanist who expanded Kew after traveling with Captain Cook on a voyage of discovery between 1768-1771 throughout South America and the South Pacific to collect plants and seeds. Today, Paul and his colleagues are working to preserve 25% of the world's flora by 2020. As he explained, plants are the foundation of biodiversity and health. As many as 100,000 plant species are threatened with extinction, making the work of the Millennium Seed Bank – with restoration and reintroduction programmes throughout the developed and developing world – of great importance.

\*Botanical considerations continued with Herbs, Horticulture and Health: Franklin's Botanical Pursuits, a lecture on 14 September by House Franklin scholar Lady Joan Reid who argued that although Franklin was not a keen gardener, he advanced botany on both sides of the Atlantic. On 22 September, Andrea Wulf told the tale of a small group of 18th century naturalists who made England a nation of gardeners in *The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession*; Andrea's book, [The Brother Gardeners](#), was longlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize 2008.

\*The House figured prominently as part of September's [London Open House](#) weekend, when buildings of architectural interest are open free of charge throughout the city; nearly 2,000 visitors came to explore 36 Craven Street.

### **Upcoming Events**

\*"A Caution to the Unwary:" Quacks in 18th Century London; 16 November, 1pm; Sarah Chaney will uncover the helpful and rueful cures of eighteenth century medicine; £5/3.50 Friends and concessions

\*Thanksgiving at Benjamin Franklin House – University Student Reception; 25 November, 6pm; a special showing of the Historical Experience and reception for local and visiting university students; £7 includes refreshments

\* Franklin and Climate Change; 3 December, 6.30pm; At the start of the climate talks in Copenhagen in December, Lady Joan Reid will explore how Franklin's 18th century thinking touched on climate change; £5/3.50 Friends and concessions

\*Children's Christmas Party; 5 December, 11am, holiday learning and fun, Franklin style; £5 per child, free for adults

\*Neighbourhood Christmas Party; 9 December, 6pm; celebrate the festive season at Benjamin Franklin House with our Craven Street neighbours

\*Poor Richard's Almanack and how Franklin Perfected the Genre; 25 January, 1pm; Sally James, the House Administrator, will discuss how Franklin created a best seller by updating a tried and true literary form; £5/3.50 Friends and concessions

\*Franklin, his sister Jane and friend Polly; 22 February 2010, 1pm; House Marketing and Development Manager, Deirdre O'Sullivan Winks, will discuss Franklin's relationships with his sister and 'surrogate' daughter

To book for all events call 020 7839 2006 or email [info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org](mailto:info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org)

## Support for the House

\*In the last quarter, Benjamin Franklin House gratefully received grants from the Fidelity UK Trust; US Embassy; Garfield Weston Foundation; and Mr. Robert H. Smith!

\*Alongside the US Benjamin Franklin House Foundation, we are working on follow-up to the June launch of the World of Possibilities endowment campaign. The long-term goal is a £4 million endowment to expand our educational mission and to provide the House with a more secure financial future. A World of Possibilities will create new versions of the Historical Experience presenting new characters, such as Franklin's black servant Peter addressing themes of justice, equality and freedom; allow upgrades to our systems, to ensure we stay abreast of changing technologies for cutting edge presentations that interest diverse audiences; establish a visiting scholars program to further study of how Franklin's sojourn in London shaped his contributions to democracy; develop a US traveling exhibition and corresponding lecture series focused on the House, to improve knowledge and awareness of Franklin in London. Please consider getting involved, email [Director@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org](mailto:Director@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org).

\* Because the endowment is a long-term effort, we need ongoing support to maintain the House's exciting offerings. Our [Friends programme](#) is therefore 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

\*USA Today [recommended the House](#) as a special place to celebrate Independence Day abroad!

\*A Good Morning America feature hailed Benjamin Franklin House as a top 10 place to see in London!

\*History Channel's Secrets of the Founding Fathers highlighted Franklin's years in London with filming at the House!

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

Thank you as always for your continued interest and support. Wishing you a positive and productive autumn,

Márcia

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