

Subject: Benjamin Franklin House - eGazette - 4th Quarter
Date: Wednesday, December 20, 2006 17:25
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An original stove in the kitchen at Benjamin Franklin House in holiday regalia

"In Christmas feasting pray take care... with God's Bounty share." Benjamin Franklin

December 2006

What a year 2006 was for Benjamin Franklin! The "Great Person," as he once called himself, was feted across the globe in his Tercentenary. And here in London, of course, his only remaining home - the largest extant Franklin artefact - became a dynamic museum and educational facility!

After many years of consultation and planning, energy and support from so many, the 1730s building that Franklin called home for nearly 16 years on the eve of the American Revolution opened for the first time on 17 January, Franklin's 300th birthday. In a fitting showing of Anglo-American cooperation - given Franklin's efforts to promote understanding between the two nations - US Ambassador Robert Tuttle and then UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, cut the ribbon to reveal a beautifully conserved Georgian building that: brings history to life through the 'museum as theatre' Historical Experience; inspires young minds through Franklin science in the Student Science Centre; and encourages study of Franklin's expansive interests in the Robert H. Smith Study Centre.

Nearly 10,000 adults and children were welcomed to 36 Craven Street during the year, achieving our aim of promoting public understanding of history and science. Read on for highlights from this final quarter of our opening year as well as upcoming news.

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS AWARD BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOUSE MATCHING GRANT

The Philadelphia-based Pew Charitable Trusts awarded Benjamin Franklin House this autumn a \$150,000 challenge grant. The Pew Charitable Trusts serve the public interest by providing information, policy solutions and support for civic life. With support from US-based Benjamin Franklin House Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Smith we will meet the challenge. This funding will help us repay an outstanding project loan of £275,000 from Britain's Architectural Heritage Fund.

UPCOMING EVENTS

* State Department Dinner

In recognition of US charity Benjamin Franklin House Foundation, the Honorable Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, will host a benefit dinner in the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Room on Wednesday, 10 January 2007. Guest speaker is distinguished author of *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*, Walter Isaacson. He is President and CEO of the Aspen Institute and formerly was Chairman and CEO of CNN and Managing Editor of *Time Magazine*. If you are interested in attending, please email ellen.mcardle@att.net.

* Conservation Lecture Series

Sharon Manitta, textile conservator and journalist will be hosting a series of conservation lectures at Benjamin Franklin House (£8 per lecture; 6.45pm arrival 7pm start). Sharon has a graduate degree in textile conservation from the Courtauld Institute of Art and has worked for museums in the U.K. and America.

Lecture 1, 13 February 2007: Caring for Cultural Objects or Why 'Restored to its Former Glory' is a No-No

The media may use phrases like 'restored to its former glory' but do they accurately reflect what is really involved in the preservation and care of antiques and other cultural objects? This talk will review the 'ground rules' of conservation with advice on protecting valuables.

Lecture 2, 27 March 2007: Textiles as Historic Objects

Textile conservation has more to do with forensics than sewing. Learn about textile conservation and the role conservators play as detectives uncovering information from fragments of the past.

Lecture 3, 17 April 2007: England Expects - the Textiles of HMS Victory

Nelson's Column, just steps away from Benjamin Franklin House, celebrates the exploits of the great seaman Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805). This talk centres around the fore topsail of HMS Victory, Nelson's flagship during the famous Battle of Trafalgar, one of Britain's largest historic textiles. Learn how the item, which was also used at Nelson's funeral, was authenticated and the stories it tells.

Lecture 4, 15 May: The Future of Historic Textiles

Sharon will review the future of historic textiles in the Internet era with ample opportunities for questions and answers.

Book now as places are limited by emailing info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org <<mailto:info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org>> or call + 44 (0)20 7839 2006

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOUSE IN THE NEWS

Benjamin Franklin House has been celebrated in the press during the quarter. Coverage has included a feature in the Architectural Heritage Fund Annual Review; the travel section of a leading Polish daily; the American Hour Online; and the Lexington Colonial Times. Craven Street was also the location for a BBC London news feature and a fashion shoot for Total:Spec Magazine!

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH AND STORYTELLING EVENT



On 7 October, Benjamin Franklin House was host to Ben's mother (portrayed by talented volunteer and educator, Linda Jaworski) and a number of area children. Mrs Franklin shared with our young visitors the amazing story of Franklin's life and achievements. Among the afternoon's highlights was a visit to Ben's Parlour, kite making, and special treats including American-style muffins and apple juice. On Saturday, 25 November, 88 children from Millfields School from the inner city London borough of Hackney, made a special visit to Benjamin Franklin House (over 1000 students have visited on the Student Free Day which takes place each Tuesday). They journeyed through the House on the children's Historical Experience, and in the Student Science Centre explored the lightning demonstration, interactive games in the Discovery Room and the Craven Street Bones in the Medical History Room.

ANNUAL BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOUSE SYMPOSIUM



The intellectual heart of Benjamin Franklin House is the Robert H. Smith Scholarship Centre which features a full set of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin and provides an inviting environment for researchers and interns. While the Scholarship Centre brings the public into Craven Street, outreach furthers knowledge and contemporary review of key Franklin themes. In autumn 2006, in association with the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library, the Annual Symposium explored two of Franklin's great passions: science and letters with experts in their field: Lord Robert May on science and Kate Muir and Jonathan Fenby on letters.

Lord May, former President of the Royal Society, Professor of Zoology at Oxford University and Imperial University, and former government science advisor, concluded Benjamin Franklin's scientific contributions were ground-breaking because he was willing to break with convention and challenge pre-Enlightenment theories. Kate Muir, columnist for The Times and author of books including *Left Bank*, drew a link between great female writers and Benjamin Franklin's writings and support of women. Franklin's first *nom de plume* was, of course, the feminine character, *Silence Dogood*. And Jonathan Fenby, formerly editor of the *London Observer* and the *South China Post*, and European Journalism Centre board member, pondered Franklin's model for tripartite relations between Britain, France and the United States, highlighting the tensions and strengths in the interaction between the three nations.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOUSE WINS ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS CONSERVATION AWARD

Benjamin Franklin House and the conservation team (including Patrick Dillon Architect, Alan Baxter & Associates, Burke Hunter Adams, Wallis Special Projects and Holden Conservation) were awarded a Conservation Commendation from the Royal Institute of British Architects in autumn 2006!

A WEB OF 18TH CENTURY RELATIONSHIPS



Michael De Guzman, Benjamin Franklin House artist, installed a temporary sculpture comprised of over 20,000 rubber bands in Benjamin Franklin's Parlour! The complex web alluded to Franklin's entanglement in 18th century diplomatic relations. It is the first in a series of temporary artistic installations to be featured at the House. Watch for future previews.

SPECIAL VISITS

Among other special visitors during the period was a group from America's Friends of Franklin; President Stephen Trachtenberg of George Washington University; the Irish Georgian Society; the President of the National Society of the Daughter's of the American Revolution (with members of the St. James' UK Chapter); members of the Pilgrims, the British Antique Dealers Association; the American Society; students from American Intercontinental University; and concierges from area hotels.

2006/2007 CRAVEN STREET GAZETTE



Watch for your edition of the annual Craven Street Gazette by email or post in the coming days.

Finally, we have so much to be grateful for in 2006 - the vision of what Benjamin Franklin House could be became a reality. To ensure we meet our educational aims in 2007 your continued support is essential: Take the Historical Experience and recommend others. Hold a private event in the House. Make a contribution to help us meet the operating expense of our new business - you can do so online at <http://www.eventinternet.com/benjaminfranklinhouse/content/donations/index.asp> or by post to 36 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NF.

One December at Craven Street, Polly (daughter of Franklin's landlady Margaret Stevenson and primary character on the Historical Experience) to whom Franklin was both mentor and friend, presented him with a homemade present with the following lines with which I shall close my correspondence in this extraordinary year:

Proud even to add a trifling grace to you

From whom Philosophy and Virtue too

I've gain'd—If either can be counted mine

In you they with the clearest lustre shine

All good wishes,

Márcia

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If you do not wish to receive these briefings; would like to add someone to the list; have a question; or want to make a contribution: email info@BenjaminFranklinHouse.org

