

Stephen Fry becomes Patron of Dr Johnson's House museum

Thursday 19 May, 2022

Stephen Fry is being announced as the new Patron of Dr Johnson's House, London. Fry has long been an admirer of Samuel Johnson, the writer and wit, who lived and worked at the house in the middle of the 18th century, compiling his great Dictionary of the English Language there. Located in Fleet Street in the City of London, the House is open to the public as a museum.

The appointment of Fry comes at an exciting time for the museum, as Dr Johnson's House Trust is applying for a Blue Plaque to commemorate the life of another resident of the house, Johnson's servant Francis Barber. Once enslaved in Jamaica, Barber later became Samuel Johnson's servant, friend and heir. He lived at 17 Gough Square 1752–1756 with Johnson while he wrote the Dictionary. This is understood to be the only property still standing in the City of London that can be identified as the home of a formerly enslaved person in the 18th century.

The plaque will mark an important part of Black History in Georgian London, and will give Dr Johnson's House an exciting opportunity to explore Barber's life and experiences, framed in the context of other black lives at the time.

[quotations and images of Fry available]

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