

# SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

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## Letter from the Director

Good News! On Thursday 4 March the Museum finally got the telephone call which it had been waiting for. The London Committee of the Heritage Lottery Fund has granted the Museum a Round 2 Pass for its *Opening up the Soane* Project, and with it a grant of £813,000, which, combined with a development grant of £186,984 already received in 2009, brings the HLF contribution to just under £1 million.

This is a tremendous boost and a relief, and means that the Museum has now raised £5 million towards our £7 million target. What is more, the HLF's generous grant acts as an endorsement to other big grant-making trusts and foundations, encouraging them to support this very worthwhile project. Not that we are totally out of the woods: Sir John Soane's Museum still needs to raise another £2 million before it can embark on its great project, and this – we hope – will come in from a combination of trusts and foundations and private donations. Indeed, support from individuals is an essential part of our fundraising for *Opening up the Soane*. A public appeal will be launched later this year, in October 2010, and we hope that your generosity will allow us to close the shortfall.

*Opening up the Soane* is the most ambitious capital project of improvement and restoration ever embarked upon by the Soane Museum. Not only does it open up more historic rooms in the Museum, and puts back on public display hundreds of unseen artefacts and works of art, but it also improves visitor, exhibition and conservation facilities and – for the first time – makes it possible to give disabled visitors access to all floors of the Museum.

The welcome news of the HLF grant comes at a crucial time in the development of our plans for *Opening up the Soane*. Over the past year, the Museum has been using our time and development funds to research, plan and investigate every aspect of the forthcoming improvements. Thus, structural investigation and opening up works have been in progress, yielding us valuable information about how Soane's building actually works and how it has withstood the test of time – notably inspection of the cantilevered staircases and the lift shaft in No. 12. Paint analysis – evidenced by tell-tale scrapes and cleaned areas in the first-floor rooms in No. 12 – and research into historic joinery, wallpaper and carpets, have also taken place, helping our architects, Lyall Thow and Caroline Wilson of Julian Harrap Architects, recreate Soane's lost private apartments on the second floor. Drawers of stained glass panels have been sorted and photographed, enabling Chapel Studios to reassemble the stained glass screens and windows that were once such a feature of Soane's Bedchamber, Bathroom and Oratory. Further research, undertaken by Keith Barley, will permit the recreation of

Reynolds's enormous *Charity* window for the Tivoli Recess off the Staircase. Adam Caruso and Bernt Schmutz of Caruso St John are busy working up their designs for the fittings for the Gallery, Shop and Study Room, working closely with Julian Harrap's team to ensure that these essential new facilities are discreetly and stylishly incorporated within the Soane fabric of No. 12 Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Alongside these plans for physical improvements come preparations for the activities which are an important part of our plans for the future. These include increased use of volunteers to help us run the Museum, more emphasis on reaching out to the local community, improvements to our website, and the development of a new Collections Management System to document Soane's multifarious collections.

All this planning and preparation shouldn't overshadow the very tangible achievement of the West Chamber, which was completed last month. A paving project for *Opening up the Soane*, this is the conversion of a dingy annexe of the Crypt, a late nineteenth-century addition to the Museum, into a well equipped storeroom for artefacts and our building archive.

Although the West Chamber Store Room will not be open to the general Museum visitor, except on open days or by special appointment, an improvement that all can see and enjoy is the reinstatement of Soane's original arrangement of sculpture at the west end of the Sarcophagus – a display which had been dismantled in the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, this is a good example of the way that even now, objects long consigned to store are being reinstated in their original positions in the Museum. As from last month, visitors can now once more appreciate the colossal bronze bust of Pluto, mounted on his high *scagliola* plinth, flanked by casts of Roman candelabra. Behind him, framed by a sort of triumphal arch of architectural salvage, is a great looking glass – a lost Soanian feature, put back here following the chance discovery of a description of it in the first guidebook to the Museum, John Britton's *Union*, of 1827. The resultant vista, when viewed from the eastern end of the Egyptian Crypt, is a revelation, with the great bronze head looming above the Seti sarcophagus, and the weird disappearing vista reflected in the mirror behind it – an effect not seen since the mid-1860s. A final element of the arrangements, the so-called Head of Nephtis – a cast of the upper part of an ancient Egyptian anthropoid stone coffin – will go back in the form of a plaster replica, the original plaster cast having been put out into the courtyard in the 1890s and subsequently destroyed when it fell off the wall in the late 1960s. This has been possible thanks to the discovery of an old cast of what appears to be the same object in the stores

of the *Gipsformerei* attached to the Staatliche Museums in Berlin. The Head has been cast and now awaits patination to resemble old red granite, before being despatched and hung in its old place between the two stone obelisks on the north side of the West Corridor. We are grateful to Ömer Koç and Simon Ray for underwriting the costs of our new Head of Nephthis. Helen Dorey writes more about the reinstatement of Soane's original arrangement of sculpture at the west end of the Sarcophagus and about the West Chamber Project further on.

It is tremendously satisfying putting back Soane's arrangements and returning his Museum to its appearance at the time of his death in January 1837, just as its creator wished. We are indeed fortunate that so much is known about the appearance of the Museum in his time, and how much evidence – documentary, visual and physical – has survived to guide our restorations. But as well as putting back historic displays, and learning more about our collections, the Museum is also trying to make the Museum a more stimulating and pleasant place to visit, and to help our visitors understand what makes Soane's amazing house-Museum tick. Recent improvements have included a bigger and better shop, with a much wider range of Soane-related merchandise, a place to sit and learn about the Museum, two new pod cast tours – free to download via our website – and this free *Newsletter*, illustrated in colour, which explains what's on and

what's coming up. To make sure you receive all four issues of the *Newsletter*, and receive invitations to special lectures and events, why not become a Soane Supporter? For £30 a year you can keep in touch and help the Soane Museum – which remains open to the public free, just as our founder intended – in a very generous and practical way.

### *The Eileen Harris Book Conservation Fund: latest news*

The Eileen Harris Book Conservation Fund was launched on 24 February at a farewell party held at the Museum for one of its longest standing colleagues, Eileen Harris. Since then, the online giving facility Just Giving has been very successful in helping us raise money towards Eileen's Fund. So far it has already brought £15,000 and another, matching sum has also been raised via cheques and pledges sent to the Museum – bringing the total amount to nearly £30,000. This has enabled Stephanie Coane, Librarian, to commission a condition survey of the book collection, which will inform the future conservation strategy. If you are one of those who made a donation since the last *Newsletter* was sent, thank you for contributing to this important Fund.

TIM KNOX  
Director



Watercolour by C J Richardson of Soane's original arrangement of sculpture at the west end of the Sarcophagus as it appeared in 1834

## Promiscuous Assemblage, Friendship, & The Order of Things at Sir John Soane's Museum

Jane Wildgoose, artist, writes about her 'cabinet of curiosities', on temporary display within Soane's Breakfast Room

In 2006 Amy Meyers asked me if I might like to create 'a cabinet in celebration of the friendship between Mrs Delany and the Duchess of Portland' to accompany the exhibition *Mrs Delany and her Circle*. When I accepted this enticing invitation, I hardly anticipated that, three years on, I would have designed a massive case occupying the entire wall of an exhibition bay at the Yale Center for British Art, nor that my installation there would accommodate over 200 specimens from the University's collections, together with the artefacts I would devise for the project here in London. In retrospect, I see that *Promiscuous Assemblage, Friendship, & The Order of Things* quietly grew from 'cabinet' in its modern sense (a piece of furniture containing objects) to site-specific installation (encompassing the more archaic meaning, of a whole room) thanks to Amy's careful nurturing which was, throughout, incredibly responsive to my developing research for the project. Though I could not have foreseen the extent of the outcome at Yale, I understood from the outset that my 'cabinet' would feature in some form at Sir John Soane's Museum when *Mrs Delany and her Circle* came to London. Soane's house has long been a significant inspiration to me – to such an extent that, when I received a request last year to recommend a key text which would give insight into my own practice, for Masters Fine Art students I was teaching at Maine College of Art, I turned without hesitation to the Museum's *Hooked on Books*. Nicholas Savage's essay had made an important contribution to my application for a NESTA Fellowship in 2005, in which I cited his insights into Soane's collections as 'potent triggers of feeling and association in his mind' as endorsement of my own aims for deepening my understanding of ways in which 'readings' and narratives may be discovered through collections combining both objects and books.

I first met Amy at the *Ways of Making and Knowing* conference she convened in London in 2005, where curator and textile conservator Mary Brooks gave a paper in which she cited my work in collaboration with Maidstone Museum. At the time I was concentrating on a series of photographic portraits of people with objects, as part of my NESTA Fellowship; on the basis of these photographs, and the work with Maidstone Museum, Amy enrolled me into the Mrs Delany project. During the summer of 2007 I was invited to participate in workshops at No. 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields with the international multidisciplinary team contributing to the accompanying book. Confronted with their compre-

hensive 'Delanyan' expertise, and learning that Mrs Delany's (1700–88) dazzling surviving material – including her embroideries and paper collages – would form the core of the exhibition, I turned my attention to aspects of the material culture of the two friends' lives that have been dispersed or disappeared: the Duchess of Portland's (1715–85) extraordinary collections, sold at auction in 1786 over 38 days, and the ephemeral shellflower work to which Mrs Delany refers in her letters, made to decorate her home, and as gifts for the Duchess.

Shortly after the workshops I looked up the catalogue to the sale of the Duchess's 'Portland Museum' in Rare Books and Manuscripts at the Center for British Art. I was immediately struck by a statement in the preface, written by John Lightfoot (1735–88), the respected botanist, chaplain to the Portland family, and compiler of this encyclopaedic record. 'Some Persons, perhaps, may object', Lightfoot wrote, 'to the Promiscuous Assemblage of the various Subjects here exhibited, and be ready to wish that they had been allotted in Order and Method, according to *Genus* and *Species*.' While I was familiar with reproductions of the 'promiscuous assemblage' of the frontispiece to the catalogue – with its double life-size representation of the Portland Vase at the apex of a towering array of drawers, shelves, shells and curiosities – recent analyses I had read suggested it portrayed the way the museum appeared in the Duchess's day. However, Lightfoot's commentary indicated that the depiction represents the dissolution of the collections in the sale room, while in the Duchess's lifetime her shell collection, at least, was in the process of being ordered according to the (then new) principles of Carl Linnæus (1707–78), to which end she hired the taxonomer's favourite pupil, Daniel Solander (1733–82). But, Lightfoot also explained, Solander had died shortly after beginning his Herculean task, followed soon after by the Duchess, 'to the great and irreparable loss to science'.



Jane Wildgoose's case at the Yale Center for British Art

Lightfoot's preface provided the foundation for my thinking about my 'cabinet', and prompted its title. I decided to explore the *Promiscuous Assemblage* of the Portland Museum auction with close reference to lots in the catalogue, and to endeavour to express the *Friendship* through the two women's shared passion for interpreting natural history, both scientifically and decoratively; Linnæus's system would appear under the guise of *The Order of Things*: relating to the Duchess's aims for naming and classifying her collections, and the organisational basis of Mary Delany's 'paper mosaic', collectively entitled *A Catalogue of Plants Copied from Nature . . . disposed in alphabetical Order, according to the Generic and Specific Names of Linnæus*.

At Yale, Louis I Kahn's Center offered a large, sleek, empty exhibition bay with a precise and minimal aesthetic, far removed from the rococo abundance of the 18th-century natural history collections I was researching. It nonetheless provided a beautifully proportioned blank canvas, where I set out to elaborate a 'memory theatre' dedicated to evoking a sense of the plenitude of the domestic interiors in which the two women lived, collected, and shared their passion for natural history. From this perspective, the Soane Museum began to assume the proportions, in my imagination, of an enchanted treasure horde: awe-inspiring, dazzling, but – perhaps, after all – best left undisturbed. Luckily, Tim Knox and Todd Longstaffe-Gowan were at hand with a generous offer for me to ransack their own fabulous natural history collections. I emerged from Malplaquet House with stuffed lizards, an array of magnificent specimen shells, a baby puffer fish, and a *Precious Wenteltrap* in its original 18th-century case, as well as three 19th-century copies of the Portland Vase. Over in Gower Street, Natasha McEnroe and Mark Carnall, Museum Manager and Curator, respectively, at UCL's Grant Museum of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy, invited me into their stores, loaning beautiful 19th-century microscope slide drawers that facilitated a miniature evocation of the cabinets in the Portland Museum catalogue frontispiece, in Soane's window-desk in the Breakfast Room at No. 13. Working closely with Jerzy Kierkuc-Bielinski and Margaret Schuelein, who were sympathetic to my ideas and inventive with their help, also with Stephanie Coane's kind co-operation, the bookcase in the Breakfast Room was emptied to house the cache of natural history specimens loaned by Tim and Todd, together with a multitude of small shells in specimen boxes, bird skins in glass jars, a pair of fragile mole skeletons, and miniature corals under glass domes, from the Grant Museum, all hinting at the extent and diversity of the Duchess's collections.

The central oval table beneath Soane's wonderful canopy ceiling offered the perfect setting for a small 'shrine' to the two friends, in the form of a plaster temple with a pair of garlanded urns on a mirrored platter. Continuing the theme of *Friendship* – which I saw as being emblemised by the



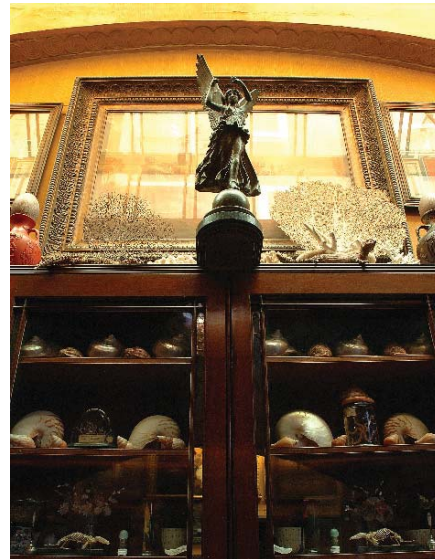
The central oval table in the Breakfast Room arranged with a plaster temple and a pair of garlanded urns on a mirrored platter

contents of the bookcase – I was keen to include some china in the display. During my research for the Yale installation I had been inspired and informed by Jo Dahn's paper, *Mrs Delany and Ceramics in the Objectscape*: an examination of emotional associations attaching to small ceramic objects exchanged as tokens of affection between Mrs Delany and her circle, and their contribution to the decorative 'objectscape' in which Delany, 'like many other women of her time and class . . . situate[d] herself: almost . . . like a self-portrait'. I was therefore delighted when Jerzy suggested we look at ceramics in Soane's china closet – a place I had long wished to explore. Although space was limited, we added delicate fluted teacups, a tiny oriental teapot, and a saucer embellished with leaves, paired with another from my own collection painted with holly leaves and moths, along with small arrangements of shell flowers and plaster curiosities (further emblems of *Friendship* and shared interests) that I devised for the cabinets in both Yale and London. Finally, we included one of Soane's two copies of the Duchess of Portland's sale catalogue, and his bound edition of the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1786) containing a fold-out engraving of the Portland Vase.

Soane's library, I discovered, also included Thomas Martyn's 1799 edition of *Thirty-Eight Plates . . . intended to illustrate Linnæus's System of Vegetables*, produced to accompany Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712–78) eight letters on botany (published by Martyn in 1785) written to Madeleine-Catherine Delessart for the benefit of her young daughter, explaining the principles of Linnæan classification. During a visit to England, in 1766, Rousseau was introduced to the Duchess of Portland through Mrs Delany's brother, Bernard Granville. They had corresponded about botany for 10 years; the Duchess gave Rousseau books, and he sent her specimens. Mrs Delany was herself sufficiently familiar with the latest taxonomic principles to organise her *Catalogue of Plants Copied from Nature . . . in alphabetical Order, according to the Generic and*

*Specific Names of Linnæus*. In addition, Martyn had published an illustration of a tessellated mitre from the Duchess's shell collection in his authoritative *Universal Conchologist* of 1784, together with 'first praise' to 'her Grace's superior knowledge . . . in the critical arrangement of [her] immense cabinet'; overall, his edition of the botanical illustrations seemed remarkably pertinent to both women. Displaying the *Thirty-Eight Plates* together with a pair of Tim's mitre shells, in one of the Museum's historical vitrines, I was reminded of Nicholas Savage's insights into the associations Soane attached to books and objects. With the collections providing such 'potent triggers' with which to illustrate the significance of *The Order of Things* in the lives of the two friends, I felt I had come full circle: within the house whose guiding spirit had acted as impetus to the work I first showed to Amy, back in 2005.

JANE WILDGOOSE  
Artist



The bookcase in Soane's Breakfast Room which temporarily houses the cache of natural history specimens sourced and arranged by Jane Wildgoose for her 'curious' display

## *Re-creating Soane's Model Room: opportunities and challenges*

The magnificent model room which Sir John Soane created on the second floor of 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1834, was dominated by a great central model stand, made specially for a cork model of Pompeii as it was in 1820. The 1835 view of the room shows this model on the lower level whilst on the upper level a shelf surrounding a large central aperture (to allow light to fall on the Pompeii model from above) supported an array of other cork models of the ruins of Rome and the great temples at Paestum in southern Italy.

Amongst the challenges of *Opening up the Soane* is that of conserving and putting back on public display Soane's more than 100 architectural models – the largest and most significant collection in Britain. A small number require major restoration, including the cork model of Pompeii itself.

This great model, showing Pompeii as it was in 1820, was cut almost in half in the 1890s when the model stand was reduced in size to make it easier to accommodate within the Museum when the original model room was disbanded.



Soane's Model Room in c.1834, engraved for Soane's final published *Description of his house*

The section which was removed was not kept and has been missing for more than one hundred years. In 2009, with the help of generous funding from the Leche Trust, the Museum commissioned the cork model-maker Dieter Coellen, whose *atelier* is in Bonn, to reconstruct the missing half, and he and his colleague Johannes Fischer made this in Germany over the winter of 2009–10 and brought it to London in February. The new section was set up alongside the original sections, which Dieter and Johannes then repaired and cleaned. The final stage was to tint the new cork so that although it will be obvious to anyone looking carefully that part of the model has been re-made, it will not jar. The result is extremely impressive but is now carefully crated up pending the restoration of the stand and its final installation in 2012–13.



Surviving section of the Pompeii Model before restoration



The new section of the cork model, depicting the so-called 'Forum Triangolare' during construction in Dieter's workshop in Bonn

Dieter Coellen writes . . .

'When I received the honour of being asked to restore the original beauty and magic of Soane's famous model stand by recreating the missing part, I saw this as a challenge, because not often do you have the chance as an artist to join forces with a great, now deceased, master via his works.

As there were no blueprints for the reconstruction, research was based on old Soane-period watercolours and drawings. It soon became clear that the missing section of the model, including the Forum Triangolare, must have depicted

volcanic ash. This part of Pompeii had not been totally excavated around the year 1820. With the scientific support of Pompeii expert Professor Valentin Kockel of the University of Augsburg and meticulous attention to detail, I and my partner, Johannes Fischer, gradually managed to develop a feeling for the correlations.

While moulding the masses of ash from cork, we took special care to make the drama of the eruption and its consequences visible. Thus the relics of buildings and streets disappear to some extent into those 'gentle' hills of ash.



The new section being crated at the start of its journey to London



Dieter Coellen and Johannes Fischer at the Soane with the surviving section of Soane's model (left-hand side) next to their new section



Detail of the new section of the Pompeii Model, completed and toned to match the surviving section

The excavations themselves we made from plaster and cork, just as in the antique model, and then adjusted the colour to match the original early nineteenth-century section. However, it is only on the model stand itself and then in the restored Model Room that the work will be emotionally comprehensible and hopefully become a new attraction for Sir John Soane's Museum.'



*Detail of Pompeii model showing the new and old sections side by side*

Interspersed among the cork models of the great ruins of antiquity, Soane displayed 20 plaster models by François Fouquet of Paris, which he bought from the architect Edward Cressy in May 1834 for £100. These exquisite models, some of which are pictured on the opposite page, depict reconstructions of celebrated antique buildings, as if pristine and newly built – the whiteness of the plaster-of-Paris being the ideal

material for this. Their miniature capitals and columns were either carved freehand, using what must have been akin to surgical instruments, or made using tiny moulds.

Fouquet was from a family of model-makers and was active between about 1810 and 1820. His father Jean-Pierre (1752–1829) made rather larger plaster models, including a famous one of the Capitol of Virginia at Richmond, USA (now in the Virginia State Library). He and his son both made models for the École Polytechnique in Paris and for the artist Louis-François Cassas who built up his collection of 76 architectural models at No. 6 Rue de Seine, Paris, with the aim of creating an encyclopaedic museum of architecture for the benefit of students. Cassas, like Soane, owned models in plaster, cork and terracotta, and his famous Gallery probably inspired Soane's Model Room.

The Fouquet models are not limited to the buildings of Rome but include celebrated Greek buildings and ancient tombs at Palmyra, in Syria, probably based on drawings made there by Cassas. Alongside the models of these ancient tombs Soane displayed models by his friend John Flaxman for 'modern' tomb sculpture. Soane was Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy and judging from his lectures, not all these models were of buildings he admired! His Fouquet model of the Arch of Hadrian in Athens, for example, could have been used to show that the building was, as he put it in his third lecture, 'full of absurdities'!



*Four details showing the new 'Forum Triangolare' section of the Pompeii model*





*François Fouquet, model of the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, near Rome*



*Fouquet model of the Temple of the Winds, Athens, badly damaged in World War II, after repair by Colin Cunningham in the mid-1990s*



*Above: Fouquet model of the Arch of Theseus or Hadrian, Athens, as it looks today following War damage*

*Left: Fouquet model of the Lantern of Demosthenes, Athens, as it looks today following War damage*

## The West Chamber

As mentioned by Tim Knox in his *Letter from the Director*, the work of creating the first purpose-designed store for works of art at Sir John Soane's Museum was completed last month.

The 'West Chamber' is a basement space at the back of the Museum, adjacent to Soane's atmospheric 'crypt' but never part of his Museum – it was originally the coal cellar of Soane's first house at No. 12 Lincoln's Inn Fields, next to his Museum. When Soane died in 1837 he left No. 12 to the nation, with the Museum, but it was an entirely separate property, rented out to provide an income. In the 1890s, the then Curator, James Wild, knocked through the west wall of Soane's Crypt to create the 'West Chamber' as additional display space for the Museum. In doing so, he compromised Soane's arrangements, destroying an evocative assemblage around a mirrored false door-case in the west wall of the crypt and installing in his new display space objects which had previously been displayed elsewhere in Soane's museum.



The bronze bust of Pluto

The West Chamber project has blocked up Wild's open arch between the West Chamber and Crypt. The door-case in the centre of the west wall has been recreated, with new Portland stone pilasters supporting the original architrave which Wild moved to an external courtyard where it was embedded in a wall. It has been carefully restored by Taylor Pearce Restoration. Today, the door-case contains a mirror, just as it did in Soane's day, but this does in fact operate as a door, providing additional back-up access to our new store. In front of it, on a porphyry *scagliola* column (now reinforced

with steel internally), is a magnificent bronze bust of Pluto, restored to its original position (as shown in the watercolour reproduced on p.3). The enfilade through Soane's Crypt has regained its original focal point and is transformed.

The West Chamber itself is also transformed with new cabinets supplied by Ocean Design housing all the artefacts (mainly plaster casts) formerly housed in our rather inadequate 'Cast Store' next to the boiler room. The new store has a stable environment and provides safe and, most importantly, fully secure, storage for all these items for the first time. There is space for conservators to work and space for the storage of stone plinths etc. on moveable 'dollies' around the cabinets. The work of transferring all the works of art has allowed us to do a full audit of items in storage, an additional benefit of the project.



The West Chamber as it now looks with the new conservation cabinets installed

This dual-purpose project has both restored an important 'lost' Soane arrangement, enhancing visitors' experience of the Crypt, and paved the way for our multi-million pound *Opening up the Soane* project by enabling us to rationalise and improve the storage of works of art not on display and to clear our old Cast Store in order for it to provide much needed additional space for public lavatories and bag storage.

We are most grateful to our generous sponsors, The Pilgrim Trust and Mr and Mrs Zimmerman-Feely, for enabling this crucial project to be completed, and to Julian Harrap Architects (the project architect was Ivonne Voelkel), Fullers Builders (in particular Lee Gardner and Sean Bulger) and Taylor Pearce Restoration (Matt Nation) for carrying out the works within budget and with the minimum disruption to visitors to the Museum.

HELEN DOREY

## The research and preparation for recreating the William Collins stained glass window, after Reynolds, in the Tivoli Recess

As part of *Opening up the Soane* we will be restoring the small space off the main staircase which Soane called the 'Tivoli Recess'.



*C J Richardson, watercolour view of the Tivoli Recess, c.1834. Photo: British Library*

Towards the end of his life Soane transformed this tiny area into London's first gallery of contemporary sculpture, filling it with works by his contemporaries (and friends) Thomas Banks, John Flaxman and Sir Francis Chantrey. He also commissioned a large stained glass window, a copy of a celebrated window designed by Sir Joshua Reynolds for New College Chapel, Oxford and made by the glass-painter Thomas Jervais.

One of the most challenging elements in the restoration of the recess is the recreation of this window, which was made for Soane by the celebrated glass painter William Collins in 1829–32. This window suffered many vicissitudes after Soane's death – the enamel paint started to peel, it lost its elaborate borders when it was moved to a new opening in the Shakespeare Recess in the 1890s and finally, it was destroyed by bomb blast on the night of 15–16 October 1940. Only the central section of the lower panel survives, in several pieces, crucial evidence not only of the technique and materials used by Collins but also of the refinement and beauty of the whole window.



*The surviving part of Soane's Charity window, by William Collins*

The Museum received funds from the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund towards the restoration of the window and research has been going on for the last year in preparation for its manufacture and



*Sir Joshua Reynolds, oil sketch for the original Charity window in New College, Oxford (Photo: By courtesy of Lord Normanton)*

installation (which will be in 2011–12). We have appointed Keith Barley of Barley Studios, one of Britain's foremost experts on early 19th-century stained glass, to manufacture the new window. We have commissioned A C Cooper, Fine Art Photographers, to take new photographs both of the oil sketch by Reynolds for the original window, in a private collection, and of the original Reynolds window at New College. We are most grateful to the Provost and staff of New College for erecting scaffolding especially to allow Keith Barley and A C Cooper close-up access to that window.

Keith has also been studying the other evidence for the Soane window. The view of the recess in 1834 indicates the colours used by Collins and the inventory sketch of 1837 shows the overall layout of the figures in relation to the glazing bars with notes confirming some colours. The photographs of 1911 are crucial in determining the pattern of the outer part of the lower panel of Soane's window – which is not a copy of the lower panel of the New College window but a variant with its central decorative scroll on a porphyry background. This lower panel must surely have been designed in discussion with Soane for it is neo-classical in feeling rather than a Gothic pedestal as it is in the New College window. The 1911 photographs are also invaluable in providing precise information about the style of the figures in Collins' original window.

Just before Christmas a crucial piece of evidence surfaced by complete chance when a German student contacted Keith to ask his opinion of a damaged window from a villa in Hamburg. This window turns out to be another Collins window of Charity after the New College window, with a

third variant pedestal (this time plain porphyry blocks) and different borders from those used in Soane's window. This, although fragmentary, provides all the evidence needed about precisely how Collins painted the drapery and the skin tones to enable us to achieve the closest possible reconstruction of the original window. The window in Germany is signed as are the borders, made by a manufacturer in the West Midlands. Alongside his study of Collins' technique, Keith has been able to commission analysis of the enamel and pigments used in Soane's Collins window (using the surviving fragments) and is working with researchers at Sheffield University on the 'recipe' that should be used to recreate the glass on which Collins painted his figures and on the constituents of the enamel colours.

Meanwhile the Museum's Architects, Julian Harrap and his project team of Caroline Wilson and Lyall Thow, have been working out the precise size of the Tivoli window – a complex exercise involving overlaying the plans and views from the Soane period on the modern survey of the area and assessing the results in relation to the evidence of the surviving fabric of both the Tivoli and Shakespeare Recesses (the opening in which the Tivoli Recess window was installed, without its original borders, in the 1890s, survives, bricked up).

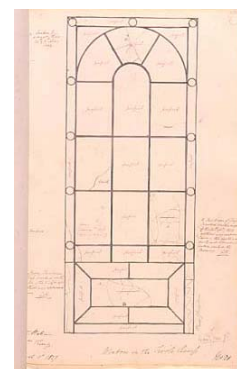
In January we were finally able to see the dimensions of the window when Keith Barley brought the initial outline cartoon to the Museum. The next stage is the manufacture and the installation, once other works to the recess are completed as part of phase one of *Opening up the Soane*, due to start on site in January 2011.

HELEN DOREY



Above: The original Reynolds window at New College, Oxford (Photo: A C Cooper)

Right: A second William Collins Charity window, extensively damaged, discovered in Germany in 2009 (Photo: Keith Barley)

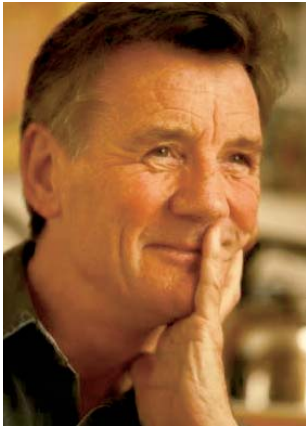


Left: Soane's Charity window in c.1911 after it had been moved from its original position to a new opening in the Shakespeare Recess

Above: Sketch of the window in the Tivoli Recess, made in March 1837, shortly after Soane's death, as part of the inventory of the Museum's contents

## *Michael Palin and Julia Somerville voice new architectural Podtours for the Soane*

Michael Palin and Julia Somerville are the distinctive voices behind the Soane's latest free podtours for visitors. Both tours concentrate on the Museum's architectural importance and legacy, but are designed to appeal to different audiences. Michael Palin presents an accessible general guide for architectural enthusiasts, while Julia Somerville voices a more detailed tour, which will appeal to architectural and design professionals, along with those who already possess a little background knowledge about the Museum and its context.



*Michael Palin and Julia Somerville*

The two new tours are the latest additions to the Museum's podtour 'library'. In 2008, the Soane launched free tours voiced by Stephen Fry and Eleanor Bron designed to appeal to adults and children. These have proved exceptionally popular and the Soane is delighted that Michael Palin and Julia Somerville, both valued supporters of the Museum, have generously given their time and talent to the next stage of the project. All tours are freely downloadable now from [www.soane.org](http://www.soane.org)

Michael Palin says of Sir John Soane's Museum: 'The man who arranged it clearly had such a lively mind, such a curiosity – not only about what architecture was based on, but what it could be used to achieve. So we have the past, the present and the possibilities of the future all here in the Museum. To me, it is like a densely written, but highly absorbing book with a series of clues in every room. It's quirky, it's quite eccentric, it's enormously simulating. It's a building that makes you think – and the more you think about it, the more you work out what it is, the more pleasure it gives you.'

Soane always intended that his house should be an 'academy of architecture' and the emphasis of these latest podtours continues that intention. Often described as 'the father of modern architecture', it is wholly in keeping with

Sir John's spirit of inquiry and his desire that his unique house should be preserved as a learning resource that it is now easily accessible via the most modern of mediums – the internet.

Over the years, the Museum has been cited as an inspiration by leading architects including Sir Richard MacCormac, Sir Terry Farrell, Will Alsop, Edward James and Jacques Herzog.

All the Museum's podtours have been made possible through the generous support of a charitable trust and there are plans to add more in the near future.

Tim Knox says: 'We took a very deliberate decision to embrace new technology because it is totally in sympathy with our founder's forward-thinking spirit. As well as using the podtours as a personal guide while exploring the Soane, visitors can also listen to them before they arrive or after their visit. Even those unable to visit us here in Lincoln's Inn Fields can use the freely downloadable tours to find out more about the museum and the man who created it.'

Simon Sharkey, of podtour creators Vocal Heroes, says: 'We tailored the tours to the exact requirements of Sir John Soane's Museum and hopefully captured the tone of this amazing place; educational, but also atmospheric and intriguing.'

Tim Knox concludes: 'We are extremely grateful to Michael and Julia and hope that our expanding library of podtours will help us to introduce more people, especially young visitors, to the intriguing world and extraordinary enthusiasms of one of the most significant figures in architectural history.'

KATE GRIFFIN  
*Press Officer*



*School visitors taking part in a podtour.*

## *Genius Reunited: Descendants of architect Robert Adam meet the descendants of his clients*

One of the great treasures of Sir John Soane's Museum is its collection of 9,000 drawings by Scottish neo-classical architect, interior and furniture designer Robert Adam. In April, Adam family descendants met the descendants of some of his notable clients when the Museum threw open its drawings collection and invited members of the families to examine the original designs and drawings that united their forebears more than 200 years ago.

The event was held to celebrate and support the Museum's ambitious Adam Cataloguing Project to make its entire collection of Adam drawings freely available online. The Museum holds the world's greatest collection of drawings by Robert Adam – one of only two architects to have given their name to a recognised style, the other being Palladio.

Great houses designed or worked on by Adam are still home to many descendants of his original clients. The event at the Museum in April gave them a unique perspective of their ancestor's dreams and aspirations when they viewed the actual drawings meticulously prepared and hand-drawn for them two centuries ago by the leading architect of the day.

The present Duke of Buccleuch, a descendent of Adam's client the 3rd Duke, said of the event: 'It is a source of pleasure and pride that amongst my forebears, the 3rd Duke of Buccleuch in particular, there was good sense and taste enough for them to engage Robert Adam in commissions as varied as the building of a magnificent bridge over the River Esk at Dalkeith Palace near Edinburgh and – it is said – the designing of a spectacular monument to the Duchess at Warkton in Northamptonshire.

To be reunited both with living Adam descendants and with some of the 9,000 drawings with which Sir John Soane's Museum is so richly endowed and which it is imaginatively cataloguing and making available to the public, offered a wonderful sense of history coming full circle two centuries on.

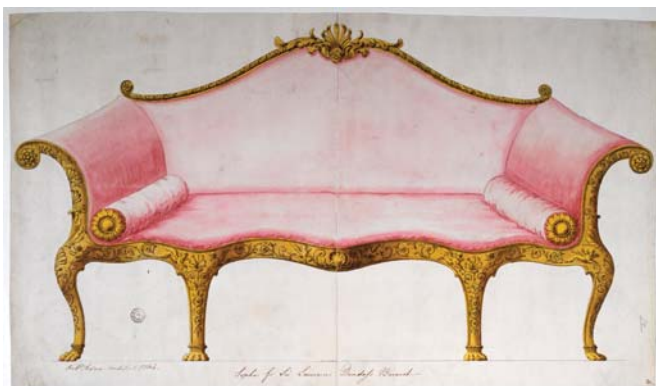
It is a web of connections which will deservedly draw many to the Museum and to the extraordinary outpouring of design talent which extends from sketches for sedan chairs to a complete scheme for a new Houses of Parliament.'

Tim Knox added: 'The Adam Cataloguing Project is hugely important for the Museum and very much accords with Soane's aspirations for his house and its collections to become an educational and inspirational resource – an 'academy of architecture'. Today we honour that generous spirit with our efforts to make the Museum's archives and drawing collections freely available online.

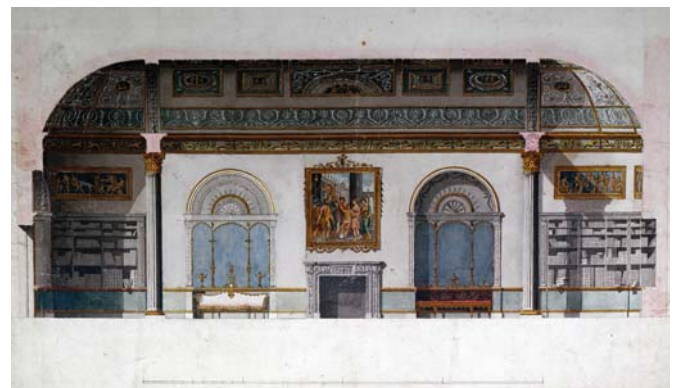
A little over 10 per cent of our Adam material is currently available online and we are fundraising to help us complete the project. Not everyone can visit the Soane, but this will enable everyone, wherever they are in the world, to see one of the Museum's great treasures.'

For further information about how you might support The Adam Cataloguing Project please contact Mike Nicholson, Development Director, on 020 7440 4240 or email [mnicholson@soane.org.uk](mailto:mnicholson@soane.org.uk).

KATE GRIFFIN  
Press Officer



Office of Robert Adam: presentation drawing of a sofa for Sir Lawrence Dundas, 1764



Office of Robert Adam: section through the Library at Kenwood House, c.1767

## Unique neo-classical silver exhibition at Koopman Rare Art, 3–25 June 2010

The Royal Collection, The National Trust, Lloyd's of London, museums and private collectors have loaned important works to the first ever exhibition devoted entirely to English neo-classical silver. *The Classical Ideal: English Silver 1760–1840* will be held by Koopman Rare Art Ltd, one of the world's leading specialist silver dealers, at 53–64 Chancery Lane, London from 3–25 June 2010. This unique exhibition will include silverware designs by Robert Adam lent by Sir John Soane's Museum from its extensive collection.

Neo-classicism in silver, furniture and ceramics dates from the second half of the 18th century and was a new idea that took the world by storm. It was both a reaction against the excesses of the rococo and an enthusiastic revival of the use of shapes and decoration from Greek and Roman architecture. Neo-classicism in English silver is a much neglected area and the exhibition catalogue by the curator Christopher Hartop will make an important scholarly contribution to research into the subject. The foreword will be written by Tim Knox, Director of Sir John Soane's Museum, and proceeds from the sale of the catalogue will go on to benefit the Museum's Adam Cataloguing Project. Koopman Rare Art and Sir John Soane's Museum will also hold a one-day conference on neo-classical metalwork in London on Saturday 19 June 2010.

One of the finest pieces in the exhibition will be the Doncaster Cup, loaned from Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire by The National Trust. This neo-classical silver-gilt racing trophy was made by Daniel Smith and Robert Sharp in 1764 and was designed by Robert Adam. The latter's drawing for the design of the cup is among those being loaned to the exhibition by Sir John Soane's Museum and will be displayed alongside it.



*The Doncaster Cup designed by Robert Adam in 1764, 49cm. Loaned from Anglesey Abbey by The National Trust (NTPL/James Austin)*



*Silver-gilt tea urn engraved with the cipher of Queen Charlotte, consort of George III. (The Royal Collection © 2010 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)*

Loans from The Royal Collection will include a soup tureen and a pair of sauce boats from a silver-gilt dinner service commissioned from the Royal Goldsmith Thomas Heming in 1789–90, probably to commemorate George III's recovery from illness. Another Thomas Heming work loaned by The Royal Collection is a silver-gilt tea urn, dating from 1768–69, engraved with the cipher of Queen Charlotte, George III's consort.

Five years ago Koopman Rare Art mounted another important loan exhibition devoted to Rundell & Bridge, the Royal Goldsmiths to George III and George IV, so it is appropriate that The Royal Collection is loaning a silver-gilt candelabrum made by John Bridge in 1828–29 to *The Classical Ideal: English Silver 1760–1840*.

The Akzo Nobel Collection at the Courtauld Institute of Art is lending a George III silver cup and cover made in London 1770–71 by Louisa and George Courtauld while a three-light candelabrum will come from Lloyd's of London. This 1774–75 piece by John Carter was designed by Robert Adam for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, a Welsh MP and landowner who was a major patron of the arts.

Another seminal piece of Adam design in the exhibition will be a candlestick loaned by Manchester Art Gallery which, like the Doncaster Cup, will be displayed alongside the

original drawing from Sir John Soane's Museum. A pair of George III silver ewers thought to have been designed by James Wyatt will be lent by Temple Newsam in Leeds, one of England's great historic estates.

Twelve items will be loaned by the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, including pieces from the celebrated silver collection formed by the late Sir Arthur Gilbert of Beverly Hills, which has recently been acquired by the museum.

Among other important items will be a pair of silver-gilt candlesticks made for the eccentric arts patron and collector William Beckford by Charles Aldridge in London in 1787–88 and a pair of George III sauce tureens probably designed by James Wyatt and made in Birmingham in 1773–74 by Matthew Boulton and John Fothergill. Loaned from a private collection in North America, these tureens formed part of a dinner service supplied by Boulton and Fothergill to Charles Vere, a landowner, whose coat of arms is engraved on the side.

Another magnificent example of English neo-classical silver in the exhibition will be a silver-gilt teapot made in London in 1785–86 by Andrew Fogelberg and Stephen Gilbert.

If you are interested to find out more, *The Classical Ideal: English Silver 1760–1840* will be open 3–25 June 2010 at Koopman Rare Art Ltd (Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 1pm, closed on Sundays. Admission is free).

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition by Christopher Hartop, with a foreword by Tim Knox, will be published on 1 June 2010. The conference on 19 June will start with a tour of the exhibition and then move to the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields for a buffet lunch and lectures. The cost per person will be £50. Enquires to 020 7242 7624.

WILL BENNETT / DIANA CAWDELL  
Cawdell Douglas

## *Wardour Exhibition and Open Day: Saturday 19 June 2010*

For the first time in many years, the Chapel of All Saints at Wardour Castle in Tisbury, Wiltshire, will be opened to visitors, and its extraordinary collection of vestments put on display. The Castle with the Chapel was designed by James Paine and the Chapel opened in 1776. It was extended by Sir John Soane in 1790 to include the altar by Giacomo Quarenghi.

In addition to seeing this exceptional building, there will also be an exhibition of its greatest treasures including chasubles and copes dating from the 15th to 19th centuries, 19th-century lace albs, church plate and the chapel's very fine 18th-century organ, built by Samuel Green in 1791, which will be played at intervals during the Open Day by a number of local organists.

The Open Day will take place from 10am to 6pm on Saturday 19 June. Admission will be £10. For further information see [www.wardourchapel exhibition.co.uk](http://www.wardourchapel exhibition.co.uk).



*The interior of Wardour Chapel, © Country Life Picture Library*

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