

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

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Letter from the Director

Over the last month or so, directors of national museums and other state supported institutions have been asked to plan ahead for cuts in government grant-in-aid. As yet, we don't know what these cuts will be, but we are expecting anything from 25% to 33% over the next four years. This, as you might imagine, will have a very problematic effect on all museums and galleries, but a small museum like the Soane will be particularly hard hit. With a small staff and limited means of generating our own funds, the cuts will inevitably mean closing parts of the Museum, and affect our core activities, like education and exhibitions, but we are determined to keep open and carry on as best we can. A large reduction in public funding will mean we shall be even more dependant on help from our patrons, supporters, donors, and other friends in the UK and USA, and in the longer term we shall have to build up endowment funds to underpin the Museum's future activities.

One thing that won't be directly affected by the threatened cuts is our major capital project, *Opening up the Soane*. This is because the entire cost of this ambitious and very necessary project – £7 million, of which we have already raised £5.5 million – has been raised independently from trusts, foundations and private individuals, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, but without any direct government funding. Therefore, the money raised has to be spent, and can only be spent, on *Opening up the Soane*, bringing much-needed improvements to the Museum at a time which will otherwise be austere and painful. We will go on site for Phase 1 of the project in January next year – the messiest and most expensive of the three phases, comprising the creation of the new exhibitions gallery, shop and conservation studios, the installation of a new lift and other heavy building work. The works will mainly be concentrated in the next door house, No. 12 Lincoln's Inn Fields, so the Museum will remain open throughout the works – although noise, dust and occasional partial closures cannot be ruled out. The works on the first phase will be complete by July 2012, when our exhibition, *Stadia: Sport and Vision in Architecture* (provisional dates 6 July – 30 September 2012), will be the inaugural show in the new Soane Gallery and coincide with the 2012 Olympic Games. Our thanks to Populous for sponsoring *Stadia*. Populous have designed the new main Olympic stadium, currently well underway in the Olympic Park in Stratford in East London, and we are terrifically proud and pleased to be working with such prestigious partners, celebrating this unique sporting opportunity for Britain in the Museum in a relevant and imaginative way.

Dividing the *Opening up the Soane* project into three distinct phases will enable the Museum to carry out the complex work of refurbishment in stages, leaving time for both staff

and stored artefacts to accommodate the changes, as well as allowing us to really concentrate on each part of the project. After the completion of Phase 1 in mid-2012 we will embark upon the second phase, the restoration and reinstatement of Soane's private apartments on the second floor of No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields. Only when this is achieved – in 2013 – will the third or final phase of the *Opening up the Soane* project be undertaken, the creation of a Study Room in what is now the New Picture Room (an 1890s addition to the Museum) where you can learn more about Soane and enjoy for the first time hundreds of strange artefacts from his unseen collections. In all, *Opening up the Soane* will take five years to achieve, but as well as putting hundreds of treasures back on view and improving conditions for visitors, it will give the Museum the space and facilities to look after its buildings, collections and staff properly.

Meanwhile fundraising continues – we still have the mighty sum of £1.5 million to raise and ideally we shall have achieved this by the end of the year. We await with interest and some trepidation news of a number of major grant applications to large grant-making trusts and foundations. A considerable sum will hopefully be raised by a grand fundraising dinner to be held this October at the Banqueting House in Whitehall – the costs of the occasion have been generously underwritten by a Patron of the Museum, so all profits from this special one-off event will go straight into the coffers of the *Opening up the Soane* project. But you can help too, by supporting our Soane Appeal, a public appeal for *Opening up the Soane*, which will be launched in October and provides an ideal opportunity for everyone who loves the Museum to help with donations, large and small.

On my daily rounds of the Museum I am continually struck by how much goes on behind the scenes – a class of school-children making models in the No. 14 basement, a project meeting being held in the Seminar Room above, and upstairs in the Library and Adam Study Room, readers making use of the Museum's unrivalled architectural collections. In addition, we now have two major projects on the go which involve cataloguing Soane's collections of architectural drawings. In April we recruited Emma Smith, Matilda Burn and Madeleine Helmer to catalogue all the drawings for five important London schemes by Sir John Soane – the Bank of England, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Pitzhanger Manor, The Royal Hospital Chelsea, and the Soane Family Tomb. Cataloguing work proceeds well under the strict but kindly mentorship of Jill Lever – which is just as well as we have only a year to complete this project, called 'Building Sites', which has been funded by the Designation Development Fund of the MLA. The catalogues, with every drawing illustrated, will be freely available via our website, with links to and from

An early design for the Library at Pitzhanger (not as built)



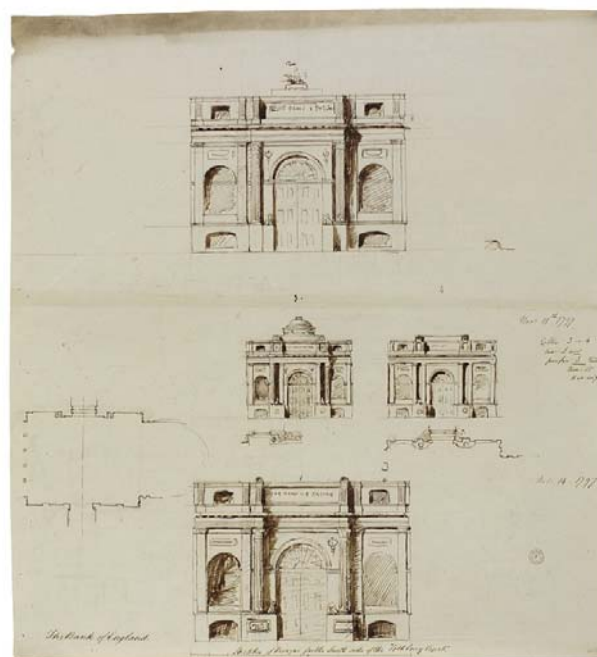
the institutions who own or occupy the Soane buildings themselves.

We have also embarked on the catalogue of the Adam Collection in the Museum. Newly appointed as Catalogue Editor for the Adam Drawings Catalogue Project is Fran Sands, who has just finished researching and writing her Phd (University of York) on the Architectural Drawings at Nostell Priory in Yorkshire – a collection rich in Adam draughtsmanship. Fran started on 12 July and is quickly finding her feet. In all there are about 8,000 Adam drawings to be catalogued, again online with each entry being illustrated. Funding for the Adam Catalogue Project has come from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the Rootstein Hopkins Foundation, Gisela Gledhill and Basil Postan, as well as a very generous grant from the Leon Levy Foundation towards the cost of digitally photographing every Adam drawing (planned for the autumn). So far, we have funding for the Catalogue Editor post for three years, but will be seeking additional funding to extend it further and complete the entire catalogue. Both these cataloguing projects are being ably overseen by the Museum’s Archivist, Sue Palmer, in her new role as Head of Library Services for the Museum. Stephen Astley, the Curator of Drawings, continues to look after the Drawings Collections in the Research Library, manfully coping with special tours and classes, readers and postal and email enquiries.

With so many new faces and initiatives, we shouldn’t forget the retirement of a faithful servant of the Soane, the Museum’s Photographer, Jeremy Butler, who, with his wife Rita, was

given a warm and heartfelt send-off on 29 June. Geremy has worked for the Museum on a freelance basis for over twenty years and his expertise and cheerful good humour will be greatly missed.

TIM KNOX
Director



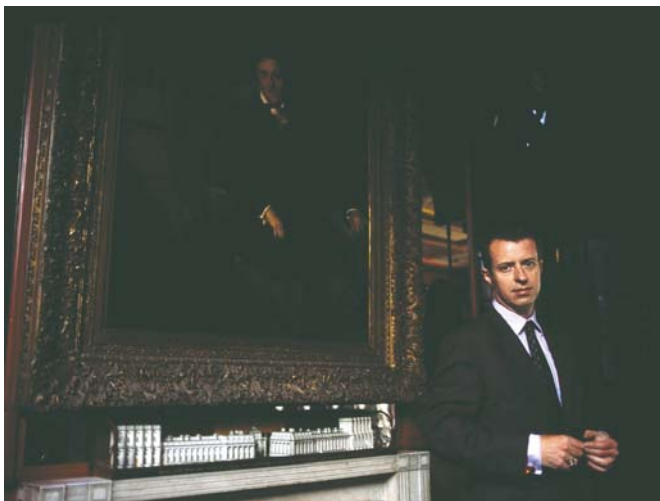
A preliminary design for the south side of Lothbury Court, Bank of England, in Soane’s hand. His inscription draws attention to how hard he is working: . . . Nov: 15/11 at night

In order for our Supporters to get to know the Soane staff a little better, we asked some of them briefly to describe their role at the Museum (including their favourite part of the Museum!); how their work will contribute to Opening up the Soane and how the project will see aspects of their work change or improve over the next few years. Photographs by Lewis Bush, who photographed the Museum staff in 2009–10 as part of a project he undertook while a student at the University of Warwick (www.lkbush.com).

TIM KNOX, DIRECTOR

I suppose I invented the *Opening up the Soane* project, which arose out of a need to protect and preserve the Museum and ensure that it could survive and flourish into the twenty-first century and beyond. With over 100,000 visitors a year with increased expectations of visitor facilities, as well as a need to earn our own keep, it was essential that we rose to the challenge in our own way – as well as carefully maintaining the fragile atmosphere and patina of the three buildings that constitute the Museum. We have been developing *OUTS* for five years now and almost every member of staff in the Museum has made some sort of contribution to it.

I run the *OUTS* project and get involved in everything – from fundraising to the design of the new loos. I love the entire Museum but have a definite soft spot for the Crypt, an often overlooked and misunderstood part of the Museum which I am pleased to say we are making darker, more creepy and confusing, and even more like a ancient catacomb or Egyptian tomb – which is just what its creator intended!



HELEN DOREY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

I have worked at the Soane since 1986 and have been Deputy Director since 1995. My role is a particularly wide-ranging one as I am Curator of works of art, Registrar (overseeing loans and object movements), oversee conservation and act as head of personnel. It is quite a challenge to juggle these roles, to say the least.



Opening up the Soane is a project that I have been very involved with from the beginning, starting with the almost two years of research into the history of every area that will be affected as well as the hundreds of works of art which will be put back on display. The precise locations of all these objects in Soane's original arrangements have been worked out by a careful analysis of inventories that go back to 1835 and by consulting the many hundreds of views and plans of the Museum that exist from Soane's time to the present.

This has been endlessly fascinating, and for me the most exciting aspect of *OUTS* is to see the end of a more than 20-year process of restoration which I have been fortunate enough to be part of. Not only am I involved with carefully checking every detail of the architects' proposals but I am also involved in many other aspects of *OUTS*, from the implementation of the Museum's first Collections Management system to the setting up of an Oral History project. But for me, the fundamental delight of this project is that at the end of it the areas of the Museum which I have always been fascinated by but have never seen other than in the meticulous views of the 1820s and '30s will have been recreated and Soane's 'permanently magical' Museum will once again be complete.

Helen Dorey writes in more detail about her discoveries and work relating to the Opening up the Soane project later

**MIKE NICHOLSON,
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**



Being involved in this Museum and particularly *Opening up the Soane* is a tremendous privilege. Most people in their working lives want to feel that they are somehow making a difference – making things better – but few of us have an opportunity to do so. Together with colleagues and some key volunteers, the small Development Team at the Museum, which I manage, has responsibility for raising the funds required for this important restoration project. Although our fundraising target of £7million is a hugely ambitious amount for a small organisation like the Soane (it's about four times our annual turnover!) the success of the Appeal so far (we have raised £5.5M) is an eloquent testament to the popularity of the Museum and to the good sense of the plans and ideas contained within *OUTS*.

For me, the best part of the job is meeting and getting to know the people who help us. Our supporters are like a large extended family; they're from all sorts of backgrounds and they find their way to the Museum for all sorts of reasons. But, like the staff who work here, they all have one thing in common: a profound respect for the integrity of Soane's original vision to create a superb house-museum for generations of people to enjoy. And being part of that feels quite special.

SUE PALMER, ARCHIVIST

I am the Museum's Archivist, responsible for looking after and cataloguing Soane's business and personal papers, and also all the records generated in the course of running the Museum since Soane's death in 1837. As Head of Library Services I also have overall responsibility for managing the Research Library, where people come by appointment to consult Soane's drawings, books and archives.

Over the last five years the steadily increasing availability of online catalogues of Soane's library and drawings collection has very much opened up this area of the Museum. Currently a team of three temporary staff are cataloguing the drawings for five of Soane's major London projects, funded by a grant from the Designation Development Fund of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and these will all be available online, complete with digital images of each drawing, by the end of the year. As the 'Letter from the Director' reveals, work has also begun on a five-year project to photograph and catalogue Soane's large collection of drawings by Robert and James Adam. Personally I am looking forward to the opportunity *Opening up the Soane* will provide to convert the existing paper catalogues of Soane's archives and make them available online on the proposed new, improved website.



My favourite things in the collection are the tradesmen's bills and household accounts which bring the domestic side of the house to life, telling us the names of Soane's servants, what the family ate, the shops they patronised and much more – material which the *OUTS* project will use to open up this aspect of the Museum to our visitors, both actual and virtual.



Bill for 8lbs of loaf sugar from a local shop regularly patronized by Soane

JANE BUSH, CONSERVATOR

As the Conservator at the Museum my role is to work closely with the Deputy Director, Helen Dorey, and the Paper Conservator, Margaret Schuelein, in all matters concerning the care of the collection, including its safe historic display, study and storage. Generally this involves not only conservation of objects and drawings, but also a range of other tasks including management of the environment, conservation housekeeping, assisting with temporary exhibitions and keeping detailed records of the work we do in the Museum.



The *Opening up the Soane* project is an extremely exciting, if rather daunting prospect, for the conservation team and we have already been working for some time on the preparations for it. Although Margaret Schuelein and I have been involved in restoration projects at the Museum since the 1980s, *OUTS* is the largest, most complex and challenging project so far. In the last twenty-five years our goal has always been to restore the arrangements of the rooms to how they were in 1837, and *OUTS* will finally mean that all the objects are back in their correct places and on view to the visitors as Soane intended them. Cleaning and conserving a wide range of objects including furniture, ceramics, framed works, plaster casts, sculpture and bronzes is just one strand of the works we will be involved with. But before this even begins, we have to plan how to protect the Museum and its contents from the hazards of building work, and survey all the objects for the project and decide precisely what needs to be done to them. An added bonus for us is that, as part of the project, the conservation studios will be refurbished, providing us with a larger space, which after all these years will finally be high spec, low tech! Just what is needed to care sensitively for this unique collection. A very exciting prospect, but it does mean that we will have to pack up all our equipment and move into a temporary space where we will be working on *OUTS* objects for over a year.

OUTS will have a huge impact on two of the three buildings which now make up the Soane Museum, but I'm glad

to say that most of my favourite places – those ambiguous spaces Soane created between the rooms, and the quiet overlooked corners in which delightful, small and hidden objects can be found – will be relatively undisturbed, and in fact our aim is to make a visit to the Museum in the next four years as extraordinary and pleasurable as it's always been, despite all the activity.

JERZY KIERKUĆ-BIELIŃSKI, EXHIBITIONS CURATOR

As Exhibitions Curator my primary role in the Museum is to organise the three exhibitions we hold per year and, alongside the exhibitions committee, to plan for future shows. Sometimes, as with the *Mrs Delany and her Circle* exhibition earlier this year, we work with curators from other institutions. At other times the exhibitions are generated by ourselves. Staging an exhibition does not only involve academic research, one also has to have a certain amount of practical ability. Knowing about rawlplugs and how to use a spirit level is just as important as being able to distinguish your *echinus* from your *ovolo* moulding!

Opening up the Soane will greatly affect my job at the Museum. The new, larger gallery will allow us to show even more of our collection to the public and I, along with other staff members, have been working closely with Caruso St John and Julian Harrap Architects on the design of the new cases. The larger floor area of the gallery will also allow us for the first time to welcome groups for tours and classes based on our programme of changing exhibitions. Another aspect of *OUTS* that I am working on is the new Museum website which will go live in 2013. This will enable us to present the Museum, its history and its collections in a manner appropriate to our present audience and to potential new visitors.

I find the Picture Room the most fascinating part of the Museum, not only because of the ingenious way in which



130 paintings ('... as many pictures as a gallery ... 20ft broad and 45ft long ...' as Soane remarked) fit into a small space, but also the costliness of the materials he used in adorning this room. Built in 1824, when he was 71, the Picture Room was completed shortly after the foundation of the National Gallery on Pall Mall. Indeed, in many respects this room can be seen as Soane rising to the challenge of the National Gallery, making the Soane truly a 'museum of museums'.

**BETH WALKER,
HEAD OF EDUCATION**



My role as Head of Education is to oversee all educational activities at the Museum, from art workshops and holiday activities to lectures and projects for students. I am also responsible for planning the strategic development of educational activities at the Soane and for me *Opening up the Soane* will bring exciting new developments. The project also signals how the Soane is prepared, even though it is an institution that is supposed to be 'frozen in time', to undertake big projects and respond positively to demand from its audience.

OUTS will see the Museum's education department employ a new Education Outreach Officer; expand its work with volunteers under a new Volunteer Coordinator; undertake an Oral History Project; work more closely with the Exhibitions Curator to develop exhibitions within the new gallery that will encourage wider audience participation; improve educational online resources and provide input to help to develop the new Study Room. Overall my work contributes to lots of planning and involves attending lots of meetings!

My favourite area is the Dome Area because of how the light constantly changes. After *OUTS*, I'm certain that a new part-favourite area will be the Architectural Model Room – it's going to be a fantastic resource and having the Pompeian model on display will be simply magical.

**COLIN WOOD, HOUSE AND VISITOR
SERVICES MANAGER**

As my job title would suggest I have a broad ranging role that brings me in to regular contact with everyone working at the Museum and with our many visitors. The Visitor Services Manager part of my job is to ensure that all our visitors leave the house feeling that they have enjoyed the best possible experience that they could have hoped for. Achieving this is greatly helped by the wonderful and unique nature of Sir John Soane's Museum, and also by the hard work and dedication of what I consider to be the best team of warders in any museum or gallery in London. It is difficult to maintain the high level of security and safety that is required and at the same time engage with our visitors in such a way as to bring the house alive for them; but our warders manage to do this, and they do it extremely well.

The House Manager part of my job involves me in the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of one of the most important house-museums in the world. This ranges from the most basic housekeeping tasks to working with our architects and contractors on the maintenance and restoration of the historic fabric of the building.

Opening up the Soane is an immensely complex and challenging project and I will be involved at all stages of the programme, liaising with the architects, designers and builders as the work progresses and making sure that, as far as possible, the Museum still performs its primary role as a place for our visitors to discover for the first time and marvel at, or to come back to time and again. I feel very privileged to be involved in what must be the last great restoration project at the house; and truly excited at the prospect of seeing the areas that have been so much changed over the years move steadily, step by step, back in time to 1837.



'Inspired By Soane'

The Museum is very much looking forward to this one-off charity exhibition that is being held at the Museum from 10 September until 2 October this year. An eclectic exhibition of original works of art by leading figures from the world of art and design, the show will also offer fifty lucky people the chance to own one of the unique and potentially valuable pieces that have been specially donated.

Leading figures from the world of art, architecture, fashion and design have generously contributed original works of art that are all 'inspired by Soane' in some way. As part of this exciting and creative venture, visitors will be able to enter a 'blind' exhibition sale that could enable them to become the owners of a new work of art created by such luminaries as Damien Hirst, Ronald Searle, Manolo Blahnik and Vivienne Westwood.

Over the summer, artists and designers were sent blank, framed cards and invited to create an original art work celebrating the Museum. The Museum had enormous fun receiving and unwrapping the art works as they arrived and is delighted that scores of leading figures from the art world have so generously supported this project. As the work of many contributors is likely to have a value beyond £200 it is anticipated that tickets sold from Friday 10 September as part of the public ticket allocation will be in great demand. A catalogue (£5) featuring all the art cards will also go on sale at the Museum.

It is hoped that the 'blind sale' of the art cards will help the Museum to raise around £40,000 towards the Museum's new Exhibition Gallery, due to be opened in 2012, as part of the *Opening up the Soane* project. In fact this exhibition will be the very last to be held in the current gallery space.

Along with helping to achieve the fund-raising target, 'Inspired by Soane' highlights the Museum's importance as a

creative resource. It is often cited as a muse by those working in the field of art and design and September's fascinatingly eclectic and eccentric exhibition perfectly demonstrates the continuing breadth of the Soane's allure.

For further enquiries please email: development@soane.org.uk

KATE GRIFFIN
Press Officer

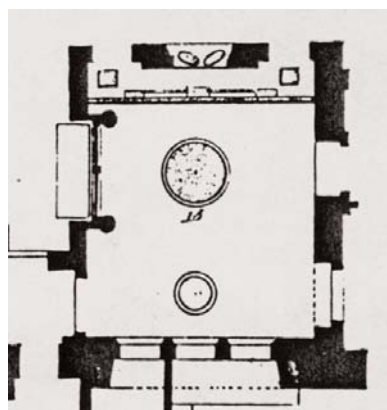


Examples of art works that will be 'anonymously' exhibited at the Soane Museum from 10 September until 2 October



Two Heraldic Monsters

Throughout the 1990s a rather forlorn plaster 'lion dog' sat in the fireplace of the back office on the second floor of No. 13 – its original location unknown and its Soane inventory number lost. In 2006 I realised, through tracking the annotations recording changes of location through inventories from 1837 to the present day, that this creature was one of a pair listed in early inventories as M210 *A grotesque animal (qu[ery]. Hindoo or Chinese, Japanese), plaster* and M211 *Another – the companion to 210, plaster*. Soane displayed them in the basement, in an opening in the south wall of the Basement South Corridor which was once a window in the outside wall. From 1825 this window lit a new small recess in which Soane placed



Plan of basement from Soane's 1835 Description showing the location of the 'antique heraldic monsters' as two ovals on the north window sill

a fine cast of an Elizabethan fireplace from Whitehall Palace. He describes the two lion dogs as 'antique heraldic monsters' in his 1835 *Description* and they are shown as two ovals on the window sill on the accompanying plan of the basement.

As part of the restoration of the three courtyards the small recess was recreated and the surviving one of the original pair of dogs (on the right in the photograph) replaced in the window opening. Since then Tim Knox has been scouring the auctions trying to find a pair to replace the one which is no longer in the collection and the Museum has now succeeded in acquiring at auction a replacement – in a saleroom in Woodbridge, Suffolk, for the modest sum of £357.50! Chinese and probably 19th century, it is almost the exact counterpart of the surviving dog although executed in earthenware rather than plaster and very slightly smaller. The pair was finally put in position in late July – after our conservator fixed the moveable tail and other elements of the new dog firmly in position – and they now appear, as they must have done to Soane, to frame the coat of arms on the cast of the Tudor fireplace behind them, as if they are indeed its heraldic 'supporters'.

In the orient, these fierce yet playful lion dogs traditionally guard Buddhist temples – usually in pairs, one with its mouth open (to retain good spirits in) and one with its mouth closed, to keep bad spirits at bay.

HELEN DOREY
Deputy Director



The 'lion dog' pair in their current position

The restoration of lost arrangements in the Monk's Parlour

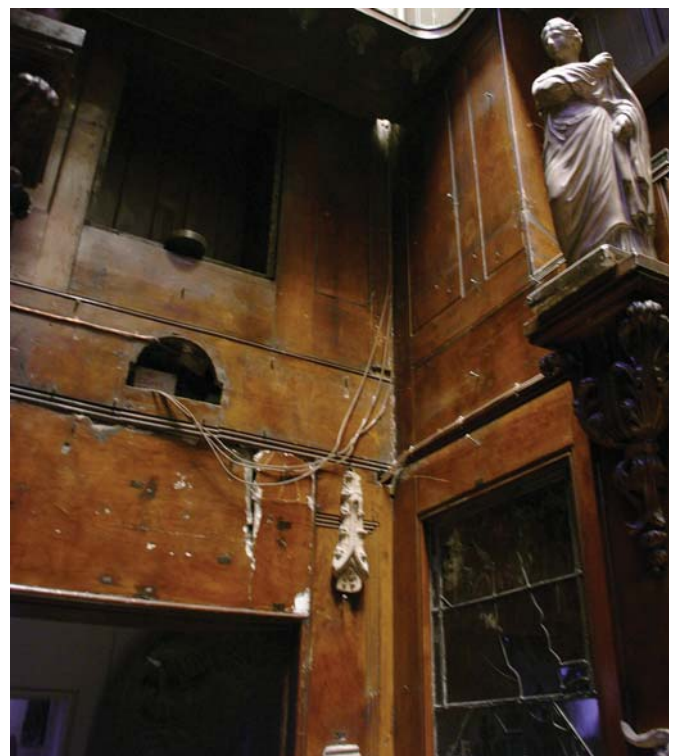
In the 19th century the arrangements in some areas of the Museum were altered for a variety of motives – usually unrecorded but often, presumably, to enable closer study of particular works of art or architectural models. The plans for the reinstatement of Soane's original Model Room on the second floor led to us having to identify the original locations of a number of models which are currently in the model room created by Peter Thornton in the late 1980s on the second floor of No. 12 but which were never in Soane's original Model Room. Amongst these were a group of four models of Soane's own Bank of England, which, rather curiously, he displayed in the antiquarian Monk's Parlour. The evidence of inventories and watercolours (see images below) enabled us to work out where they must have been displayed – above and either side of the entrance door.



Frontispiece to John Britton's *Union*, 1827, showing one half of the Princes Street model (to the left of the dark coloured female figure on the bracket upper left). Above it is an area of wall with nothing displayed upon it – the number sequences in the original inventories proved that the model now in this position must have been put into this arrangement at some point between this view and Soane's death in 1837



Detail showing the arrangement of works of art and models above the door to the Monk's Parlour in 1825, from a watercolour view by Joseph Michael Gandy. Directly above the door is an arrangement of heads: above these is a model of the Tivoli corner at the Bank and above that a model of the Pitt Cenotaph in the National Debt Redemption Office



The area above the door before the recent reinstatement

Two of the models had been put into glass cases by Arthur Bolton, Curator in the 1920s, and had to be carefully removed from modern bases. The watercolour views show that the models were designed to be seen from below (and so may have been made with these positions in mind). One half of the model of the Princes Street Vestibule at the Bank had cut-outs in the front of its base-board to enable a viewer to look up into the model from below. These cut-outs were carefully pieced in and painted over in a restoration of the 1970s. When we carefully removed the modern inserts we found on one half of the model the original label bearing Soane's inventory number.

Directly above the door of the Monk's Parlour Soane also

displayed a group of plaster casts of small medieval heads. In the centre is a marvellous wooden head, which must have come from an elaborate church monument (sadly its origin is unrecorded but its original paint surface, with traces of gilding, is preserved). This is placed, with a touch of humour, so that it appears to be 'wearing' the one cast in this arrangement which is not a head, but a crown.

The recreation of this arrangement has restored a grouping of Soane's Bank of England models and small casts of medieval ornament not seen since the late 19th century.

HELEN DOREY
Deputy Director



The Monk's Parlour as it now looks

The Re-hang of Sir John Soane's Picture Room

The Picture Room at Sir John Soane's Museum is one of the most imaginative and magical of all his interiors, with its giant 'planes', which open up to reveal paintings hung within. Here hang not just Soane's two celebrated series of Hogarth paintings *A Rake's Progress* and *An Election* but also his important collection of early 19th century pictures and a large number of architectural watercolours by Joseph Michael Gandy of Soane's own designs.

In October 1823, at the age of seventy, Soane bought No. 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields for £1,480. This purchase was probably prompted by the urgent need for space to house his growing collection of paintings. Despite the death of his elder son a few weeks later, Soane began work immediately on plans for the re-building of the stable block at the back of the house to create a Picture Room, with the mock-Gothic Monk's Parlour and Monk's Cell in the basement below. The rear courtyard of No. 14 became the romantic Monk's Yard.

Soane was intensely proud of his Picture Room, being able to boast that through the use of large 'moveable planes', resembling giant cupboard doors, 'with sufficient space between for pictures'

'... the small space of thirteen feet eight inches in length, twelve feet four inches in breadth and nineteen feet six inches in height, which are the actual dimensions of this room, is rendered capable of containing as many pictures as a gallery of the same height, twenty feet broad and forty-five feet long.'

The design of the Picture Room, with its south wall unsupported from below and the space interconnecting with the Monk's Parlour beneath as the moveable planes open and close on the south side, is one of the most spatially imaginative and exciting parts of Soane's Museum. The quality of the carpenters' and joiners' work in the Picture Room is exceptionally high and it seems that Soane took particular care over its specification. He may have wished it to rival, on a small scale, the founding collection of the National Gallery, the Angerstein collection, purchased for the nation in the same year that Soane was building his new Picture Room. Soane must have felt that his two series of Hogarth paintings, as opposed to Angerstein's one, deserved a spectacular setting. Even the floor is the finest in the house, with oak boards within a wide border of mahogany. As the new 'National Gallery' was miserably housed in Pall Mall in its early years, the contrast between it and Soane's new gallery must have been pointed.

John Britton singled out the high quality of Soane's Picture Room for special praise:

'The ceiling of this room is highly ornamented, the chimney-piece is novel and beautiful, the doors of

the dwarf bookcases are of the choicest mahogany ornamented with brass, and the whole is finished in the most skilful manner.'

Beneath the moveable planes is a brass shelf and below this are shallow bookcases with mahogany doors inlaid with ebony strips, made by John Robins. Each pair of bookcases is separated by a recess containing a decorative brass column. One of the bookcases on the north side had a glass door to enable light to penetrate down to the Monk's Cell below.

Views of the room in 1825 show it furnished with an Indian ivory table and chairs, the table covered by a red cloth on which is a cork model of the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli. By 1830 the table had been removed to the Morning Room on the second floor but the matching chairs remained in the Picture Room.

At some time before Soane's death one of the bookcase doors on the north side was removed to create a recess into which a small mahogany table on castors, could slot. This table enabled Soane to use the room as a kind of library, where he could sit and use the books from the bookcases, as well as a Picture Gallery. The room has a substantial chimney-piece of unusual Soane design, with a blend of Gothic and Classical details and an Axminster carpet – which would have ensured it was warm and comfortable to work in.



The Picture Room on 18 July 1823

Riva degli
Schiavoni
by Canaletto



Soane took great care in putting together all the arrangements in the Museum – those in the Picture Room being no exception. His Museum was to represent the ‘Union’ of the arts and he hung architectural drawings, such as 15 Piranesi drawings of the great temples at Paestum and a group of *capricci* of Roman ruins by Charles-Louis Clérisseau, in amongst Shakespearian scenes, portraits and landscapes. Works on paper were intermixed with oil paintings.

In pride of place, over the fireplace, hung the great Canaletto view of the *Riva degli Schiavoni*, which had previously belonged to William Beckford of Fonthill, along with two other smaller Canalettos which Soane had acquired from the Earl of Bute’s sale. Here the great Canaletto must have looked almost like a great window, with a view over Venice.

As with all the works of art in his Museum, Soane re-arranged his paintings frequently, as he acquired new works. We are fortunate that several inventories record the precise hang of the room at the time of his death – the hang that he wished should be preserved (the Soane Museum Act of Parliament stipulates that the arrangements be kept as nearly as possible as they were at the time of his death).

These inventories have revealed that the eight pictures of the *Rake’s Progress*, with their slightly titillating subject matter, were hidden away behind the planes on the north wall, where they hung in a row below Calcott’s *Passage Point*. A comparison between the draft inventory of 1835 and the final version of 1837 shows that Soane had the eight scenes hung in order beginning on the back of the left-hand plane until the end of his life when, sometime between 1835 and 1837,

he altered the arrangement – presumably for more comfortable viewing and explanation of the story – so that when the planes opened scenes 1–4 were straight ahead, hung on the north wall, with scenes 5 & 6 on the left-hand plane and the last two scenes 7 & 8 on the right-hand plane.

After Soane’s death the original arrangement in the Picture Room was quite quickly altered, for reasons which are now obscure. In 1849 Soane’s celebrated *Rake’s Progress* had been removed to the South Drawing Room, where it was hung on large wooden stands (as shown in the 1884 view below).



View of the South Drawing Room, 1884 from *The Graphic magazine*



The Passage Point by Sir Augustus Wall Callcott

In the 1890s the large Canaletto of the *Riva degli Schiavoni* – one the best half dozen of his works in the world – was moved from its place of honour above the fireplace to the ‘New Picture Room’, a space at the other end of the Museum created by the then Curator, James Wild, in order that artists wishing to make copies might have better access to them. Augustus Callcott’s *A Passage Point* went with it.

During the war, Soane’s Hogarths were whisked away with the National Gallery paintings to the safety of the Welsh slate mines, their frames left hanging empty on the walls here at the Museum. When they returned the pre-war hang was reinstated and the opportunity was not taken to reinstate the original hang.

As recently as the 1980s the room was re-hung again by Peter Thornton, who reinstated the original colour scheme of the room. He wished to place all the works on paper within the planes, to protect them from the light, and have only oils (much less affected) facing into the room.

In 2000 the restoration of the original hang in the adjoining Picture Room Recess provided the opportunity to re-hang the inner south planes of the Picture Room – used solely to display watercolours of Soane’s own designs – a permanent exhibition of his work – as they were hung in 1837. The remainder of Soane’s original hang is, however, yet to be reinstated.

The *Opening up the Soane* project, which will start on site in January 2011, includes work to turn the New Picture Room (created in 1889–90) into an ‘interpretation room’, walled off from the Museum as it was in Soane’s time. This will mean the removal of Soane’s three Canalettos and the Callcott from

this room and it is our intention to move them back to the Picture Room and to reinstate fully Soane’s original hang.

The loan of the large Canaletto to the National Gallery from October 2010 to January 2011 means that the Picture Room needs to be re-hung in early 2011 (late January or early February). Moving this large and heavy painting out of the Museum is complex and difficult (to manoeuvre it out it has to be passed across the void of the Dome area) and so it is logical that on its return it should go back to the Picture Room to complete the re-hang.

This will enable visitors once again to enter this wonderful room and see ahead of them a dazzling view of the Venetian lagoon, open the north planes to see Callcott’s view over a cool north Italian lake and the south planes to see the ‘real’ view of Soane’s Picture Room Recess with the *Nymph* by Sir Richard Westmacott appearing atop the Bank of England, surrounded by Roman ruins.

The re-hanging works need to be carried out by a professional picture-hanging team and scaffolding and protection to the floor is required. After a tender process involving four companies the Museum has appointed the specialist firm of JPW to carry out the works.

As part of the re-hang we will be replacing modern mirror plate fixings with replicas of the original hanging rings used by Soane. These survive in some cases and came in several different sizes and patterns. A mould needs to be made for each pattern and the rings then cast in brass and date stamped 2011 so that they cannot be mistaken for original rings. The number of rings and the sizes required have been carefully calculated and this work will be carried out by Arlington

Conservation. The reinstatement of the rings will play a vital part in restoring the original appearance and atmosphere of the room.

Once the re-hang has been completed a further phase (not included here) will be to install a new lighting system to replace the current lights which date from c.1988.

Sun-X, a specialist firm, has installed (2010) UV-excluding film on the lantern and skylight of the Picture Room, bringing the level of UV light entering the room down to zero. We are continuing to investigate the risks associated with visible light (having mitigated the risk from UV light entirely) and

alongside these investigations we are looking at the feasibility of making careful facsimiles of about a dozen works on paper, which Soane hung very high up, right under the skylights – if that should be necessary. A report on this matter will be laid before the Trustees in September and any facsimiles we decide to use would be separately funded. They would be hung in the original frames whilst the works themselves would be housed in our Research Library collections.

HELEN DOREY
Deputy Director



The existing hang on the east wall of the Picture Room



A computer-generated image of the proposed new hang on the east wall

Soane Museum Greeting Cards

A range of exclusive, high-quality greeting cards has recently been produced and is now on sale in the Soane Shop. After repeated harassment from some of our more frequent visitors, we had no option but to reproduce the fantasy views of the *Via Appia* and the *Circus Martius* by Piranesi and two of the 'masquerade a la grecque' designs by Petitot, which were such a hit several years ago. New designs have been added, which are proving equally popular; at only £1.90 each, and generously sized at 15 cm × 21 cm, they are excellent value.

They will also be available on the Museum's newly-developed e-commerce site (probably from October) together with a range of unique Christmas cards. Do remember that we are delighted to offer members of the Soane Supporters' Circle a 5% discount.

JULIE BROCK
Enterprises Manager



An Appeal for help...

Life here at the Soane just seems to get busier and busier. As Tim mentioned in his 'Letter', work on *Opening up the Soane (OUTS)* is due to begin on site early next year and, as you have seen from the articles in this *Newsletter*, staff across the Museum are busily preparing to make the project happen. Here in the Development Office, we are working hard to close the final funding gap. As you know the Museum has raised £5.5M of the £7M we need to complete the most important capital project we have ever undertaken. We hope to have the remaining £1.5M in place sometime next year, but in order to do this the Development Office needs a little help.

In October we will be launching a Public Appeal, during which we will be approaching as many people as possible to help the project in any way they can. This will of course generate a substantial amount of administrative work, above

and beyond the regular tasks of our small team. Therefore we would be very interested to hear from anyone who might be interested in getting involved in the fundraising side of the OUTS project. We are in urgent need of committed, practical, hands-on help to deal with the administration generated by the Appeal, which will continue well into 2011. This could be a wonderful opportunity for someone who would like experience of working in a museum – as well as helping with this important project.

Should you be interested in helping the Museum in this way please get in touch with me on 0207 440 4243, or via email at mcopps@soane.org.uk

MAGNUS COPPS
Appeal Coordinator