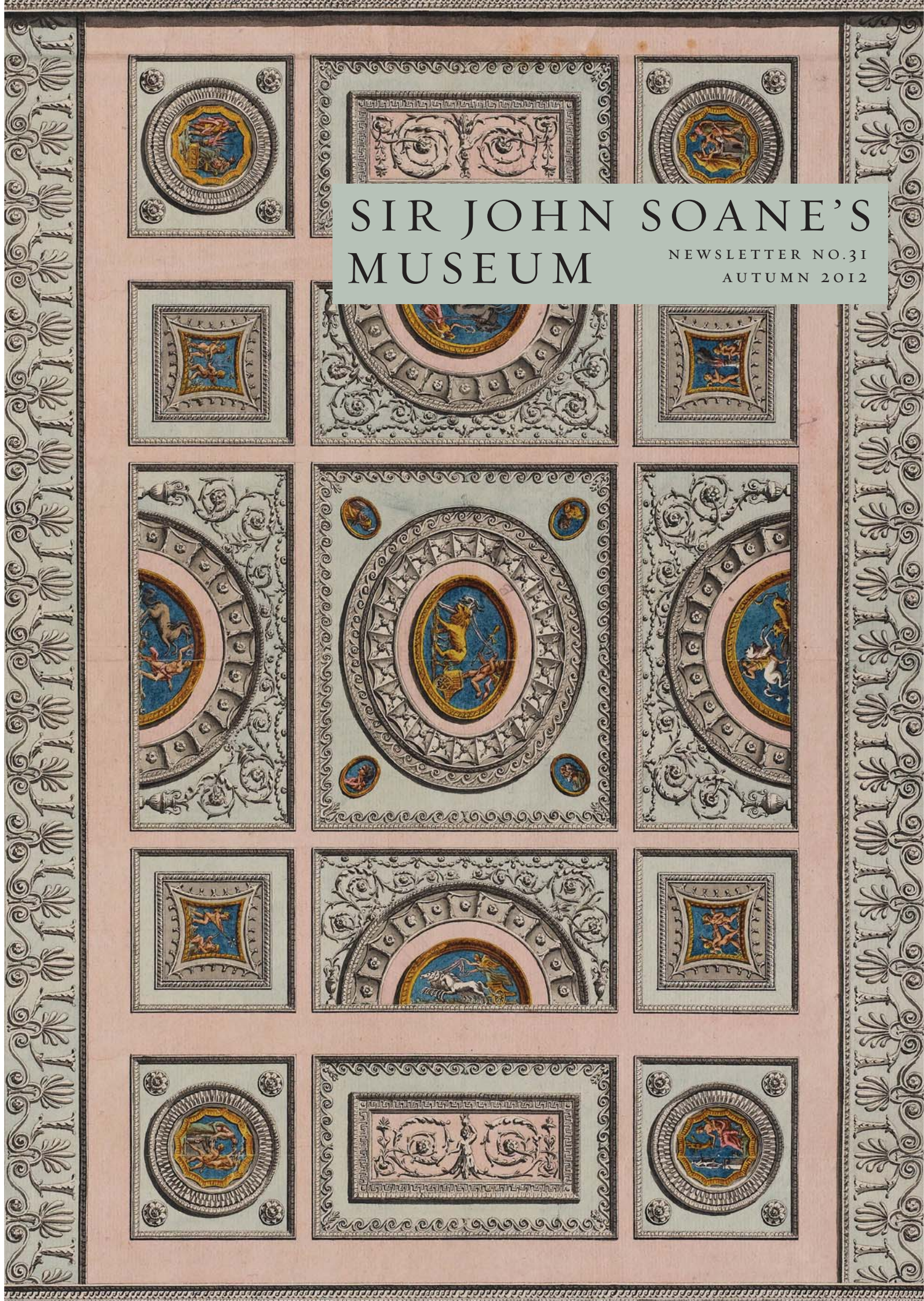


SIR JOHN SOANE'S  
MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER NO.31  
AUTUMN 2012



## Letter from the Director

### *'... in all its atmospheric splendour'*

Having successfully completed the first phase of *Opening up the Soane* (OUTS), the Museum has enjoyed an almost constant round of parties and celebrations over the summer. On 20, 21 and 27 June we held not one, but three special openings to unveil the newly restored No.12 Lincoln's Inn Fields. The staggered openings were held because the Museum can only accommodate about 150 people at any one time, and there were a large number of donors and supporters who have helped with OUTS over the last few years and who we were keen to thank.

No.12 was finally opened to the public on 6 July. We've had a splendid response from people and it has been a great pleasure to see visitors marvelling at the newly restored townhouse, especially the dramatic colour schemes and cunning paint effects that Soane devised for the house he built for

his own use in 1792, which have been faithfully reinstated. Regular visitors enjoyed discovering the new facilities: the conservation centre on the second floor; a gallery for temporary exhibitions on the first floor (which up until recently hosted our contribution to the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, the exhibition *Stadia: Sport and Vision in Architecture*); a new shop and cloakroom on the ground floor and lavatories and lockers in the basement. The ingenious new lift – which rises four floors and opens three ways – is of particular interest and people love the way that it has been carefully disguised behind historic joinery, notably in the No.12 Breakfast Room, where a glazed bookcase filled with calfskin-bound 'volumes' opens to reveal the gleaming lift doors!

In September, we held a further series of openings for our new Conservation Centre, including a special reception to thank the Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation in America



The new Exhibition Gallery in No.12. Photograph: © Dennis Gilbert courtesy of Julian Harrap Architects

Front cover: Finished drawing for the ceiling of the library at Kenwood, Adam office draughtsman, 1767, executed with minor alterations

*'So far the work to "Opening up the Soane" is looking good – there was a fascinating sense of things not always being quite what they seem, from the hidden doorway to the cleverly disguised lift!'*

Philippa Charles (Director, Garfield Weston Foundation)

*'I am full of admiration for the thoughtful changes that have been wrought on the buildings ...'*

The Hon. Elizabeth Cayzer (Patron)

*'Many congratulations. When I despair of the modern museum world, and I do frequently, the Soane always revives my spirits.'*

David Beevers (Director of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton)

for their support of these facilities. Our guests of honour were John A and Cynthia Fry Gunn, who made the lead gift for the new centre and whose name it now bears. Shortly after this we also held two small thank you parties for the City Bridge Trust and the Tana Trust, who made it possible for the Museum to install the internal and external lifts in No.12.

The most satisfying thing about completing the restoration of No.12 is to see how well the new facilities work, and how the improved circulation prevents wear and tear in the Museum. Moreover, spend per visitor in the Museum Shop has gone dramatically up, and our marvellous new corps of volunteers – drawn from a pool of, so far, 45 people of all ages and backgrounds – are doing a tremendous job assisting the Warding team in showing the Museum, helping visitors and coping with coats and bags. I'm very proud of what the

Museum has achieved over the last few years, but I am also proud of, and grateful to, my staff for their hard work and enthusiasm making our plans for the Museum – *Opening up the Soane* – come increasingly to fruition.

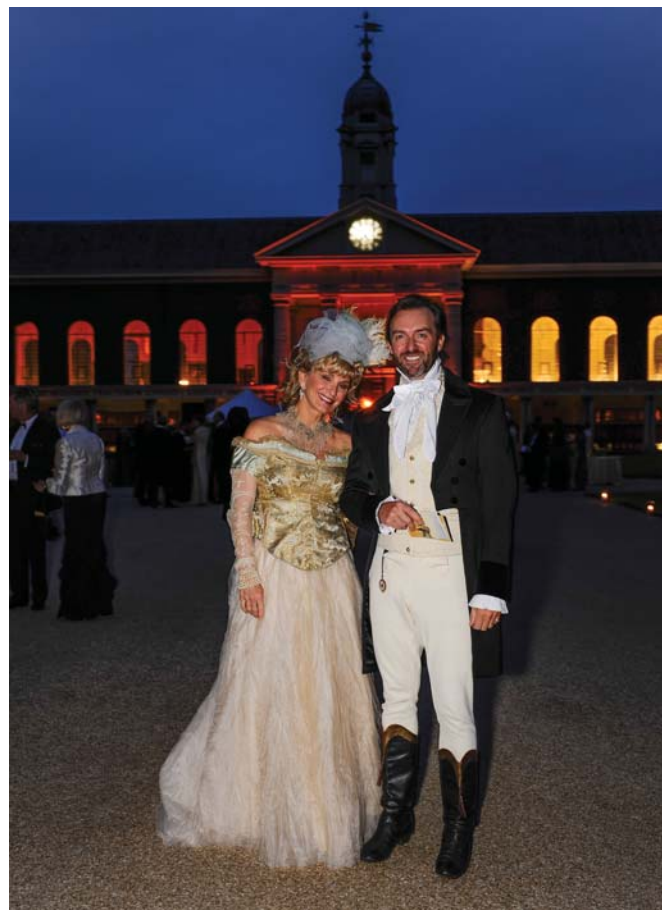
Nos 12 and 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields now provide all the facilities needed to run a modern visitor attraction without the distracting presence of coats, bags and merchandise within the historical interiors of No.13. As well as the new conservation studios; gallery; shop; cloakroom and new lifts in No.12, our education centre; research library and offices are conveniently located in No.14. At long last, Soane's Museum and collections can be carefully preserved and shared with our visitors in all its atmospheric splendour – just as Soane intended.



John A and Cynthia Fry Gunn, celebrating the opening of the new Conservation Centre, with Director, Tim Knox. Photograph: Ralph Hodgson

### A Regency Rout & Permanently Magical

But the main event of the year had to be the 'Regency Rout' – our glamorous fundraising party held on 20 September to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the building of No.13 Lincoln's Inn Fields at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea – an appropriate venue as Soane was Clerk of the Works to the Hospital from 1807 until his death, and built, among other things, its Stables and Infirmary. All the funds raised as a result of holding the 'Rout' will help kick-start our fundraising for an endowment for the Museum, which we are calling 'Permanently Magical'. Patrons and supporters from both sides of the Atlantic helped us to raise just over £400,000 towards the appeal (including match funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund Catalyst Endowment Fund, which has pledged £2 million to the Soane Museum endowment if we can raise £4 million ourselves). This is a staggering sum of money and the Museum is grateful to all those who have so generously supported in this way.



Right: Guests of the 'Regency Rout', Soane Patrons Matthew and Sybil Orr in splendid Regency attire in the Figure Court of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Photograph: Miranda Parry, MPP Image Creation



The Great Hall of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, where Director, Tim Knox (standing centre stage, in costume as Sir John Soane himself) made a (very brief!) speech before dinner was served. Photograph: Miranda Parry, MPP Image Creation

### 'The return of . . . Soanean perfection'

All this partying and careful planning ahead has not, however, affected progress with the rest of Phase I of OUTS, and our preparations for the restoration of the private apartments on the second floor of No.13 – Phase II. The structural work for the recreation of the Tivoli and Shakespeare Recesses is now complete, and these diminutive galleries are now being fitted up with their plasterwork and panelling (they are due to be re-opened at the end of this year). The Tivoli Recess has a particularly elaborate ceiling, incorporating three skylights, one glazed with amber glass, a plaster Apollo head surrounded by rays, eagles, snakes and acanthus leaves! All this was destroyed in the nineteenth century to create additional lavatories, so has to be carefully recreated.

The recreation of Soane's private apartments – which for many years have been inaccessible behind those barriers with bells! – will take place from April 2013 until late 2014. Phase II will also include the reinstatement of the Entrance Hall and North Drawing Rooms to their original appearance. A third (and final) phase, due to start in 2015, will see the return of a number of features at the rear of the Museum to their Soanean perfection and the conversion of a large top-lit gallery (a late nineteenth-century addition) into a Study Room. The Study Room will enable visitors to explore aspects of the Museum through a series of permanent and temporary displays, as well as showcase some of our hidden treasures.

### The Fugitive Finial

Sir John Soane is buried in the strange but magnificent tomb he erected over the grave of his wife, Eliza, in 1816, in the burial ground of St Giles-in-the-Fields near St Pancras Old Church (now St Pancras Gardens). Some of you may remember from reading a previous *Newsletter* that my colleague, Helen Dorey, Deputy Director and Inspectress of the Museum, discovered that one of the distinctive domed capstones or finials from the enclosure surrounding the tomb was being offered for sale on eBay! The finial had presumably gone astray when the Tomb fell into disrepair and was vandalised, and had been replaced by a modern copy when it was carefully restored in 1990 by the Soane Monuments Trust. Helen contacted the London Borough of Camden, which cares for the Tomb, and they alerted the police. The



Above right, the reinstated finial back in place on Sir John's tomb

Right, Daniel Mundy, Andrew Coles, Robert Bargery and Andrew Wright at the Soane Family Tomb in St Pancras Gardens



penitent vendor eventually withdrew the finial from sale and it was handed over to Camden Council. The work of reinstating the finial in its original place was carried out for Camden Council by our architects, Julian Harrap, and was paid for by the Georgian Group, which manage the residual funds of the now disbanded Soane Monuments Trust. Our thanks to Shaun Kiddell, Jessica Gibbons, Andrew Wright and Gary Stronge of Camden Council, to Robert Bargery and the Council of the Georgian Group, to Andrew Coles of Julian Harrap Architects, and to Daniel Mundy the stonemason, for their help in setting this wrong to rights, and, of course, to our beady-eyed colleague Helen for spotting the fugitive finial in the first place!

### *By Appointment: Teazel Suppliers to the Soane*

The distinctive Soane teazels, those spiny thistle-like plant heads (from the Common or Wild Teazel – *dipsacus fullonum*) that gently remind you not to sit on our antique chairs, are a favourite talking point with our visitors. We use large numbers of them – each teazel has to be suitably fresh and prickly to act as a deterrent! For years staff members and friends risked life and limb collecting them every autumn from the sides of motorways, but we now have an official supplier in the persons of Simon and Georgina Broadhead of Gatcombe on the Isle of Wight, who scour the island for teazels and send us a large box of them every year. Harvesting takes place every April, after the seeds that are contained in each teazel have been scattered to the winds, or

eaten by birds – they are a great favourite with goldfinches. Indeed, the Broadheads have even started their own teazel plantation to ensure an unbroken supply. Thank you Simon and Georgina for supporting us in this imaginative though practical way!

TIM KNOX FSA  
Director



*Soane teazel suppliers, Simon and Georgina Broadhead with their prey on the Isle of Wight*

## *A New Stair Carpet for No.12 Lincoln's Inn Fields*

*Susan Stern from Historic Carpet Research describes the challenge of developing an appropriate design for new stair carpets in Nos 12 and 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields where, unlike No. 13, we do not know exactly what carpet Soane laid or (in the case of No. 14) his tenants chose!*

In furnishing his new home Soane would have been able to choose from a wide range of carpet types and designs and would have given this decision careful consideration; carpets were a crucial part of interior decoration. We wanted to recreate a carpet for the stairs of No. 12 that he might have chosen, and therefore drew on knowledge of contemporary examples and of Soane's own preferences. There is, however, little evidence of the original stair carpet purchased for No.12. An account of 1804 for the supply of 'Dark Ground ¾ wide Brussels stair carpet' from the firm of John Robins was most probably for Soane's country house, Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing. But this account demonstrates that Soane was pur-

chasing the fashionable Brussels weave and there are later orders for such carpets that are specifically for rooms in No. 12.

Brussels carpet is traditionally woven in '¾ width', that is three quarters of a yard; 27inches, an appropriate width for townhouse stair carpets. The colour palette of a Brussels carpet is limited to five colours which are set up as warp threads. In the 18th and early 19th centuries the colours were selected for each pass of the wefts by 'drawboys' working behind the loom (additional colours could be 'planted' at extra cost). The introduction of the Jacquard pattern card system in 1825 replaced the need for the boys but setting up the loom is still a large part of the cost of bespoke Brussels carpet.

The 1825 watercolours of No.13 Lincoln's Inn Fields show a stair carpet with a patterned ground and foliate border. When a new carpet was needed around 1990 this pattern was replicated and, for economy, sufficient length was woven

for the stairs of both No.13 and No. 12. However, in opening up No.12 detailed analysis was made of remnants of Soane's original decorative schemes for the rooms and staircase and these guided the redecoration, including the design of a new stair carpet. David Bamford (Makers) Ltd, (who made the hand-knotted carpets for the Library and Dining Room in No.13), and Avena Carpets worked with Sue Stern, Historic Carpet Research, on this project.

The emphasis on the 'antique' in the stone finish of the staircase walls, the contrast of the faux Siena marble frieze and the Pompeian colours in adjacent rooms suggested that the carpet for the stairs should have a bold pattern with a dark ground colour and strong borders. Soane would have seen the rich imperial porphyry in ancient Roman buildings and statuary, and this was chosen as the ground colour for the main field. The pattern is imitative of crystal pebbles in igneous rock and is taken from a detail of an early 19th-century pattern in the archives of Avena Carpets, the manufacturer who wove the carpet. The carpet on the stairs is the standard 27 inch Brussels but a narrower loom was set up to weave the strips for the landings.

The carpet was fixed on the stairs with the original brass rods and eyelets (a few of the eyelets were missing and had to be replaced. The top flight of stairs is narrower but also has eyelets for a carpet, which would have been a more hard-wearing simpler weave, and has for the time being been left bare). Where possible, the landing runners were also fixed in the authentic manner using lead plugs – the fixings for the original carpet which survived in the stone steps – and brass rings stitched to tapes on the underside of the carpet. The lead plugs dictated the unusual overlapping of the carpet at the turns of the stairs.

SUSAN STERN  
Historic Carpet Research



*The Soane carpet in production on a Crossley loom. The pile is 100% wool and the colours were dyed in-house to a high intensity to achieve the depth of colour required*

## *Giving our Past a Future: The Work of World Monuments Fund Britain*

*Exhibitions Curator, Jerzy Kierkuć-Bieliński, explores the second exhibition to be held in the new Soane Gallery in No.12, which will run until 26 January 2013:*

The restoration of historical buildings is a subject close to the interests of all who love and use the Soane, which, as we know is going through a highly dynamic period of restoration. The preservation of our architectural heritage forms the subject of our current exhibition: *Giving our Past a Future: The work of World Monuments Fund Britain.*

The exhibition focuses on five celebrated sites where the intervention and support of World Monuments Fund Britain (WMFB) has helped restore and conserve the following buildings: Hampton Court Palace, St George's Bloomsbury,

Strawberry Hill House, Coventry Cathedral, and Stowe House. The chosen projects, which span the period from the middle ages to the early nineteenth century, provide almost a survey of architectural taste in Britain. In the case of Strawberry Hill House and Stowe House in Buckinghamshire, there also exists a connection to Sir John Soane – giving the Museum an opportunity to exhibit some of its otherwise hidden treasures. Both these projects were also supported by the HLF.

Amongst the exhibits are two drawings from Soane's Adam collection, dating from 1766 and 1767, showing designs by Robert Adam for the ceiling and fireplace of the Round Drawing Room at Strawberry Hill. Horace Walpole's 'Gothick' '... plaything house ...' which he likened to a

bauble, formed the frame for his incomparable collection – one of the greatest amassed in the eighteenth century. The novelty of the ‘gothick’ architecture and the range and quality of the fine and decorative art on display at Strawberry Hill made the house at Twickenham a popular public attraction. However, by the later part of the nineteenth century Walpole’s idiosyncratic interpretation of medieval architecture was derided by those who sought a more ‘archaeological’ approach to the neo-gothic. The collections were dispersed and the house began to lose many of its architectural and decorative features – a situation that continued into the twentieth century. In 2004 WMFB placed the building on its Watch List and in 2008 a two-year project undertook the restoration of Walpole’s ‘plaything’. The Round Drawing Room is just one of the rooms that have been returned to their original state. The incomparable collections that were housed in Strawberry Hill are represented by a series of miniatures that were once displayed in a famous rosewood cabinet Walpole called the ‘Tribune’. A rare, seldom-seen drawing in Walpole’s own hand showing how he planned to display his collection of miniatures in the ‘Tribune’ will also be exhibited.

The final project to feature in the exhibition has the greatest connection to Sir John Soane in his role as an archi-

tect and as a collector. It involves a story of bankruptcy and a dramatic reversal of roles where the patron is forced to turn to his architect for financial help. I refer to the rise and downfall of Stowe House, Buckinghamshire. Soane worked on this most princely of houses for the Marquess of Buckingham in the early 1800s when he created the Gothic Library – a fitting setting designed to house the Marquess’s collection of Anglo-Saxon and Irish manuscripts. By the 1830s however, the estate had fallen on hard times and the 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (the son of the Marquess) turned to Soane for help. An extraordinary correspondence between the architect and his patron will form part of the display, including a letter where the Duke asks Soane for a loan of £5,000, suggesting several items from his collection as security. Although Soane declines the request, in 1833 he does purchase three valuable manuscripts from Stowe including the incomparable Grimani Commentaries by Giulio Clovio (on display). These were later joined by the Duke’s collection of about three hundred gems (probably purchased in 1834 for £1,000) which are now, due to their size and value, rarely displayed to the public. Despite Soane’s financial assistance, the contents of Stowe were disposed of in two great sales in 1848 and 1921. In 1923 the house was transformed

into Stowe School. WMFB became involved in the efforts to preserve and to restore the House in 2002, led by Stowe School, the Stowe Preservation Trust and the HLF. So far, the Marble Saloon, a space inspired by the Pantheon in Rome, has been restored as has the Large Library. However, still more needs to be done to secure the future of this exceptional house with its strong ties to Sir John Soane.

*This exhibition has been meticulously curated by Jo Tinworth, who has contributed to the Soane’s exhibition programme since 2009, and is generously sponsored by the Pacificus Foundation and Symm.*

JERZY KIERKUC-BIELINSKI  
Exhibitions Curator

### *The Adam Drawings Project: New Finds and Old Favourites*

Cataloguing the Adam drawings collection continues apace, and our excellent digital photographs of the drawings, funded by the Leon Levy Foundation, are of enormous assistance in the collation of drawings for specific buildings, and the identification of previously unattributed drawings. A good example can be seen with the Edinburgh Riding House, the drawings for which I catalogued in May.

In 1763 the Royal Academy for Teaching Exercises was founded in Edinburgh, following a trend that had been prevalent across Europe since the late sixteenth century. Its members were largely Scottish aristocrats who subscribed £2,722.0s.15d towards the creation of a riding school on Nicholson Street. Robert Adam was commissioned, and presentation drawings – now lost – were sent to the school’s director, John Fordyce. Further drawings for the project remained in the Adam office, and thus are to be found today in the Soane Museum.

The fabric was complete by April 1764, being basilican

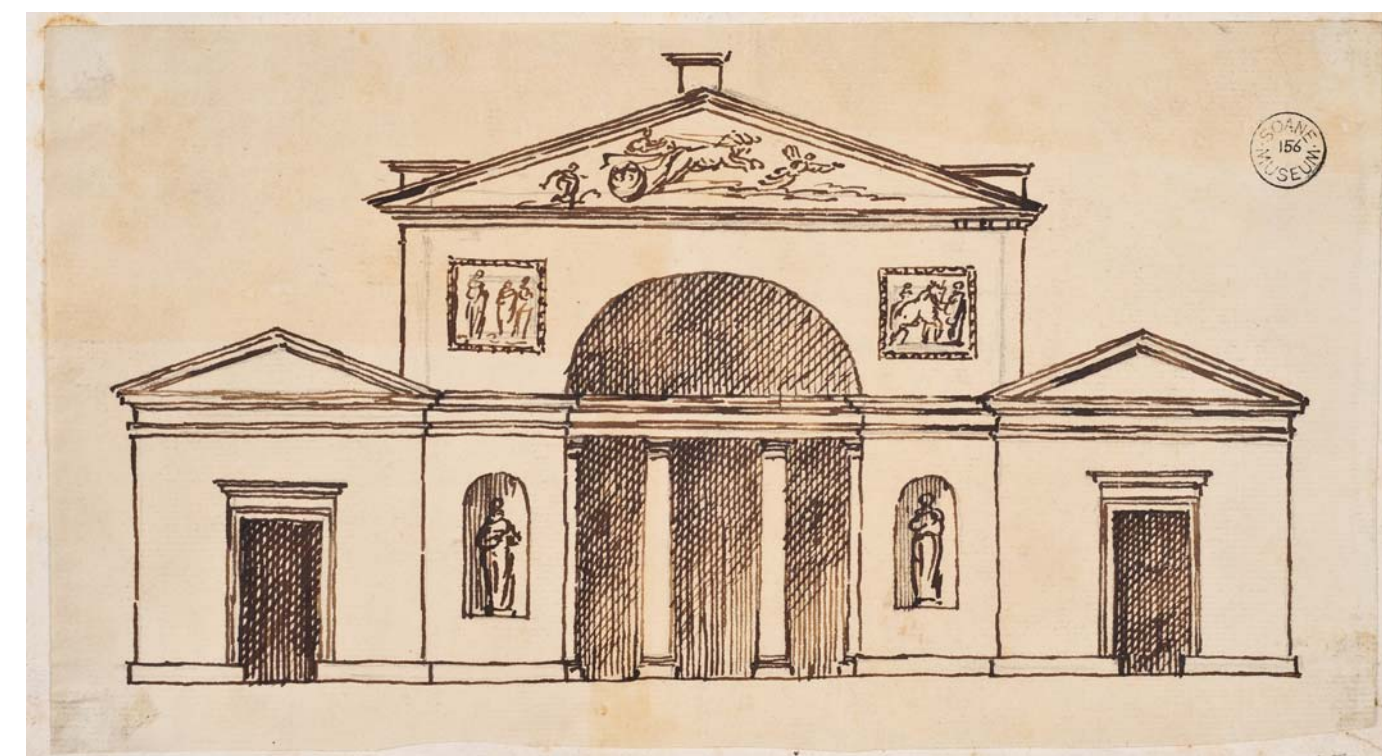
in form, with a central riding hall; a lobby at one end surmounted by a viewing gallery; and with stables running the length of the building to either side. It was executed with slight alterations to the extant drawings at the Soane Museum, but in accordance with the drawings it made use of the Tuscan order, not only as a means of sustaining economy in building, but also being iconographically appropriate considering the utilitarian usage of the building.

Unfortunately, the riding house was quickly swamped by the urban sprawl of eighteenth-century Edinburgh. A new site was chosen in the 1828, and the plot on Nicholson Street was sold to the Royal College of Surgeons. It is now the location of William Playfair’s Surgeons’ Hall, built in 1829–32. And as such the drawings at the Soane Museum are the only surviving record of Adam’s building.

Prior to the cataloguing project, six drawings were known for this building. Five of these had helpfully been inscribed by William Adam (junior) when he compiled the Adam folios



Finished drawing of the chimney piece for the Round Drawing Room at Strawberry Hill, Adam office draughtsman, 1767, as executed



Preliminary design for the Edinburgh Riding House, Robert Adam, 1763, unexecuted



The south front of Kenwood House

after Robert and James's deaths. But during the course of cataloguing I have found a further three preliminary designs for the building, all in Robert Adam's own hand. None of these are inscribed, but they all depict the riding house, one in plan, and two elevations of the entrance front, all drawn in free-hand, and with conspicuous similarities to the extant finished drawings which record the building almost as executed.

It is always exciting when I am able to identify a previously unattributed drawing, but amid the captivating work of cataloguing the Adam drawings it is sometimes possible to overlook their principal significance, and that is to inform research on Adam and his architecture. The Adam drawings collection draws numerous library visitors to the Museum each year, including, most recently, those conducting research to inform the current English Heritage, large-scale programme of repairs and redecoration 'Caring for Kenwood', primarily financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Kenwood, once a seventeenth-century brick villa, with an orangery built on one side by the 3rd Earl of Bute, was purchased in 1754 by the Hon. William Murray, the Lord Chief Justice who was elevated to the Earldom of Mansfield in 1776. In the 1760s Murray decided to regularise the house, commissioning Adam to build a library wing to balance Bute's orangery. This library became one of Adam's finest and best known rooms, and he continued his work at Kenwood by redecorating much of the interior, adding an attic storey to the central block, and refacing the south front with Liardet's composition ornamentation. (The front cover of this *Newsletter* shows a finished drawing for the ceiling of the library.)

The Soane Museum is in possession of 55 Adam drawings for Kenwood, which I finished cataloguing earlier this year, and a handful of which were also new attributions. These are the only known extant drawings for Adam's work at Kenwood, and unsurprisingly, therefore, in the winter of 2011, and the spring of 2012 I had the pleasure of showing them to Dr Susan Jenkins, Senior Curator, London & East, English Heritage; Laura Houlston, Curator (Collections) London & East, English Heritage; and Wesley Kerr, Chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund committee for London. Each had been keen to compare Adam's drawings with the proposed works at Kenwood.

Laura reports: 'Caring for Kenwood' has given us the opportunity to redisplay eight of the ground-floor rooms, including the prestigious library designed by Robert Adam. It has been invaluable to consult the collection of Adam drawings at the Soane Museum, seeing the original works on paper, as well as now being able to obtain digital images quickly for reference. Particular documentary evidence kept at the Soane has fed into our redisplay decisions. For example, the drawings which relate to the library's colour scheme have been used for comparative purposes, and the specific designs for Adam's library window seats have informed our design for recreating the seat legs.

The role that the Soane Museum's Adam drawings collection has played in the HLF-funded project to restore Kenwood is a forceful reminder of the significance of the collection, and I am delighted in the knowledge that cataloguing the Adam drawings for online publication can facilitate further research of this character.

FRANCES SANDS  
Catalogue Editor (Adam drawings project)

## Education Update

As always, the Education Department has been very busy these past few months. In addition to carrying on with our excellent programme of visits for schools and workshops for children and adults, there have been some interesting 'firsts' for the Education Department over the summer months too . . .

### Education and Exhibitions

With the fine new exhibitions Gallery at No.12 now open, we have greater scope to develop educational activities that tie in specifically with the Museum's programme of exhibitions. For example, the first examples of exhibition trails for children were created for the recent *Stadia: Sport and Vision in Architecture* exhibition by Education Intern, Jennie Saunders and a new trail for the current World Monument Fund Britain exhibition is currently being devised by our latest intern, Fiona Stuart. We also have an exciting programme of events planned around the Piranesi exhibition, taking place in February to May 2013.

In June – July 2012, our Schools & Families Education Officer, Lucy Grace Trotman and Jennie Saunders worked with Year 6 pupils from the local St Clement Danes School in Covent Garden to help them study, design and build model stadia – one of their final projects as primary school pupils. Inspired by the Soane's wonderful exhibition: *Stadia: Sport and Vision in Architecture*, the pupils took part in four days of activities and workshops that tied in with the imminent London 2012 Olympic Games. Off-site visits to Arsenal's Emirates Stadium and the redeveloped Highbury Corner Stadium were organised and Lucy and Jennie delivered workshops at the pupils' school that saw them design and build their own stadia, which when all placed together, formed their own version of the Olympic Park. The project was a great success and a lovely way to say farewell to a class with which the education team has worked, in various guises and projects, for the last two years.

Also tying in with the Olympics, Head of Education, Beth Walker, devised a project based on the 'Cawdor Vase' for Year 5 pupils from St Alban's C of E Primary School in Camden. The Vase provided inspiration for the pupils of St Alban's school to create and write their own Greek myths that told of the origins of the Olympics as part of a 10-week project, delivered by artist Chloe Cooper and supported by Kathryn Newman. Six stories were painted on replica volute craters, which were then displayed in the Museum's New Picture Room – the first time in fact that children's work has been displayed in the Museum. As a result, visitors have enjoyed learning about the myths of Delilah the Architect (inventor of Pole Vaulting) and Max the Vet (creator of Fencing), guided by panels written by the children themselves.

### Education and Enterprise

Following the success of the many projects that have seen the Museum collaborate with Higher Education institutions (such as the Bartlett School of Architecture and the London College of Fashion), the Education Department recently expanded this area of its work to include enterprise. Students and alumni from the Royal College of Art's Goldsmithing, Silversmithing, Metalwork and Jewellery (GSM&J) MA course worked with Beth Walker, Julie Brock (Enterprises Manager) and Olly Perry (Retail Manager) to create artistic responses to Soane's eccentric house and collections in the form of jewellery to sell in the newly designed Soane Shop.

### Education, Engagement and the Community

The Museum's Community Engagement Programme has had a busy summer. From June to September the Museum's first ever inter-generational project took place. This involved older people using the Millman Street drop-in centre at Holborn Community Association, members of the University of the Third Age (U3A) who were involved as part of a Shared Learning Project, and local young people. To find out more information about the project, to see images of it taking place and, most importantly, to view the charming animation film produced as a result of the project, please see the Museum's website: [http://www.soane.org/education/community\\_access/intergenerational\\_work/](http://www.soane.org/education/community_access/intergenerational_work/)



Replica volute craters by Year 5 pupils from St Alban's C of E Primary School in Camden

The Museum has set up a joint Publicity and Access Consultative Team (PACT) with the Hunterian Museum (on the opposite side of Lincoln's Inn Fields) to address access issues within the Museum. The group is made up of enthusiastic disabled individuals who meet three times per year. PACT has already been invaluable in helping with sensible arrangements of cabinets in our new shop and advising on large print guides for the *Stadia* exhibition which will form a blueprint for all other temporary exhibitions. We look forward to working with the team into the future to ensure a wide demographic of visitors is able to experience the Museum.

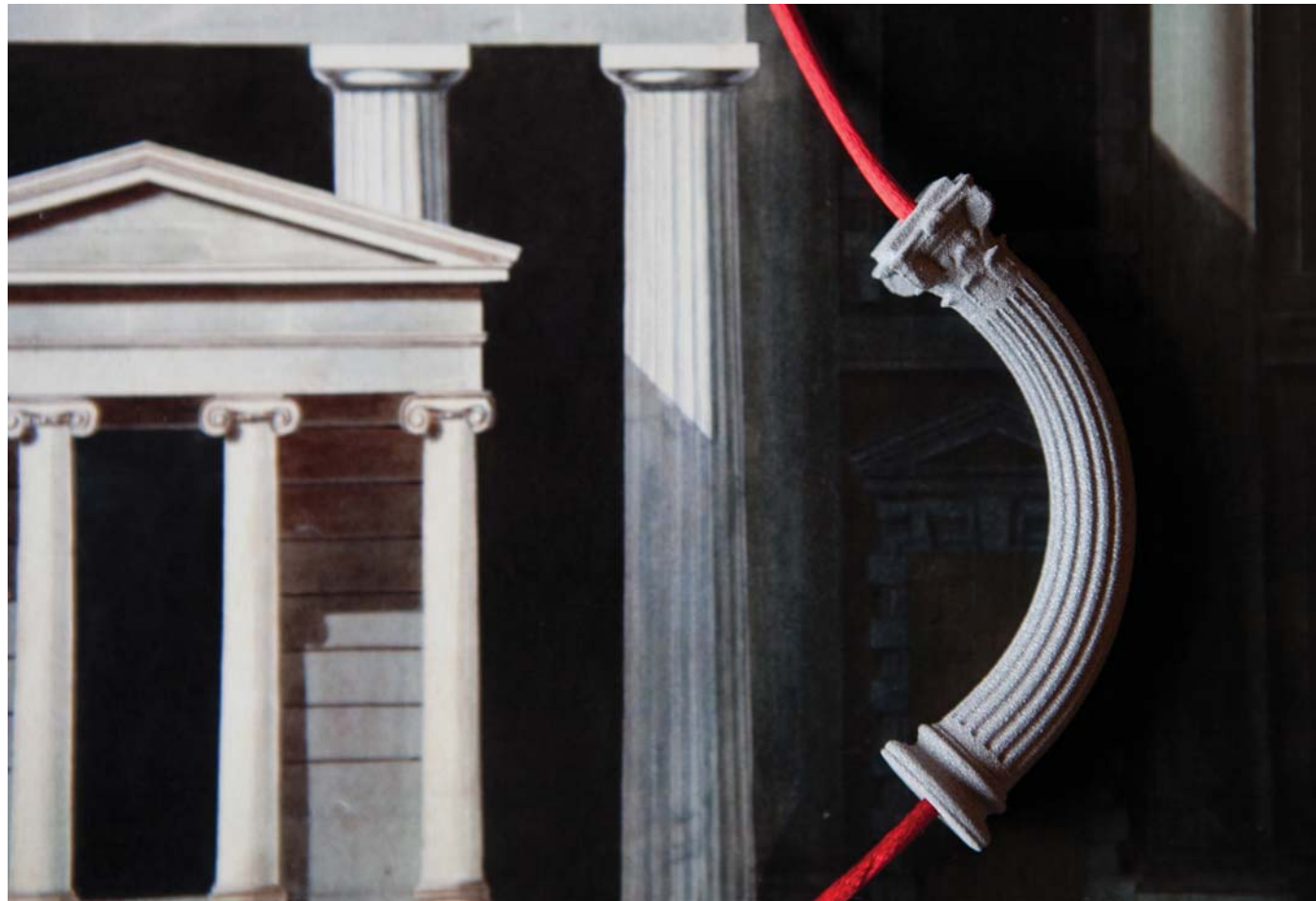
### Coming Soon

Never ones to rest on our laurels, the Education Department has some exciting projects in the pipeline for the next few months. The Handling Collection, part of the Community Engagement Programme, is going to be developed through a project with the Building Crafts College in Stratford (East London). Generously funded by the Ernest Cook Trust, stone-carving and wood-working students will create replicas of objects from the Museum, thereby honing their skills and benefiting the Museum at the same time.

The Museum is delighted to be part of the Schools in Museums Programme, the national flagship project run by the Arts Council and funded by the Department for Education. National museums have been paired with museums in the regions in order to encourage increased visits in areas of least engagement. The Soane is working with museums from Pennine Lancashire on school-based projects with an architectural focus.

Details of all aspects of the Education Department's work can be found on the newly-redeveloped Education pages of the website: <http://www.soane.org/education>. The redesign of the Education section of the website has allowed the programme to be set out more clearly, for ease of use. The 2012-13 programme of adult art workshops is also visible online (or contact Beth Walker on 020 7440 4254 or [walker@soane.org.uk](mailto:walker@soane.org.uk) for a paper copy) and offers many fascinating new skills to learn such as paper cutting, etching or oil painting. These workshops also make wonderful gifts!

BETH WALKER  
Head of Education



A curved Roman column becomes the centrepiece of a necklace: just one example of the exclusive new range of jewellery designed to be sold in the Soane Shop by students and alumni from the Royal College of Art. Photograph: Lewis Bush

## Soane Enterprises

Amid the fanfare of the reopening of No. 12 Lincoln's Inn Fields in July, the Soane's brand new shop on the ground floor of No.12 was launched to the public for the first time. This elegant new retail space, designed by Caruso St John, is the Museum's first ever purpose-built shop.

The new location of the shop is ideal as it allows passers-by to visit the shop without having to queue up to enter the Museum as well. This gives us a unique opportunity to turn ourselves into a destination store for those looking for something stylish and imaginative. The bespoke fixtures and fittings made by Goppion SpA also offer a significant increase in shelf space so that we now have the opportunity to retail many more lines than was previously possible.

We have been really pleased by the reaction to the new shop from our customers, press and friends of the Museum who have all been overwhelmingly positive. Most importantly for the success of the new venture, we have already seen our sales increase by 25% since the shop's relocation. But we're by no means resting on our laurels. As the winter nights draw ever closer, the Enterprises team has been

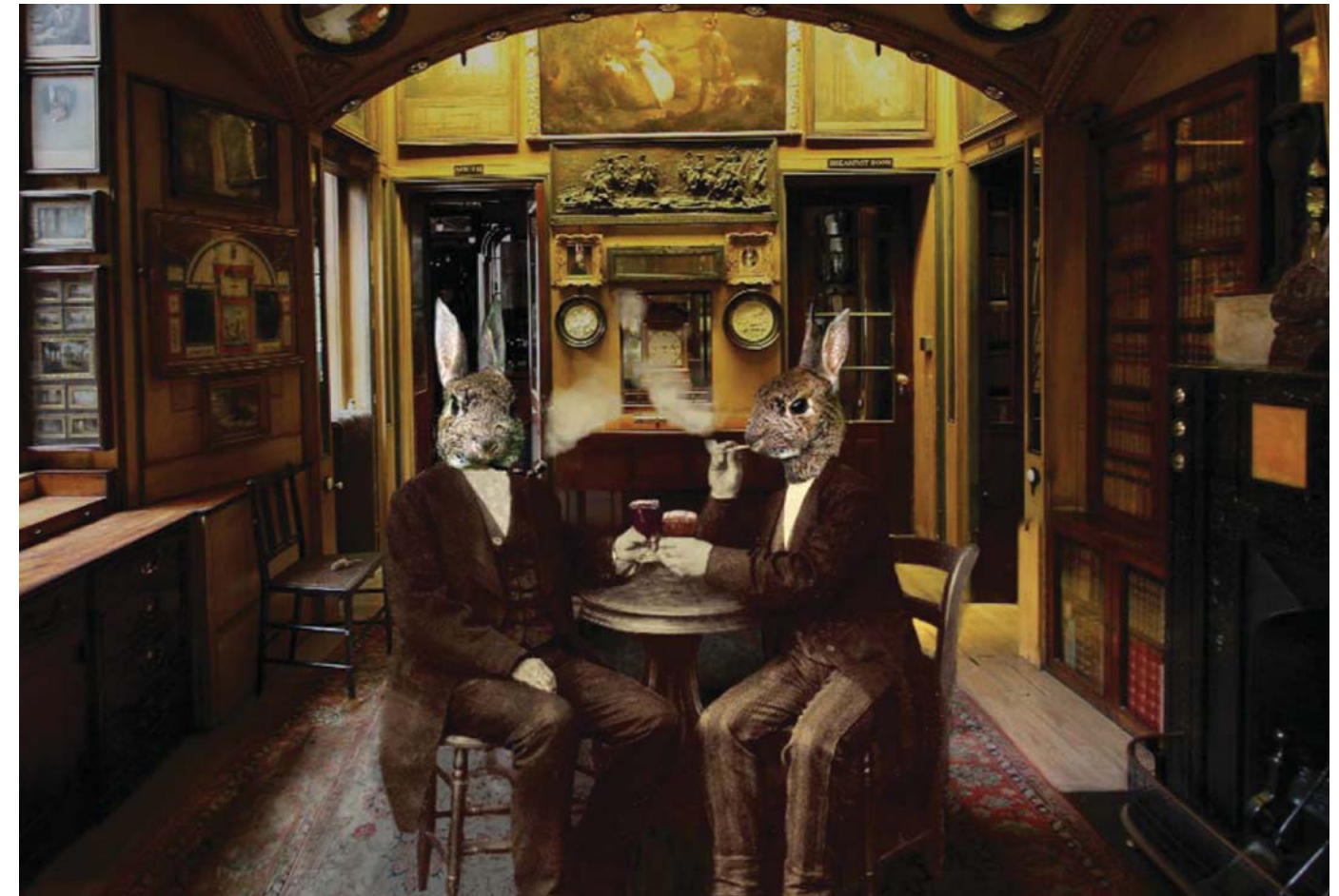
developing a special range of products for Christmas too.

Already in store for the festive winter season is a new range of jewellery, glassware, greetings cards, wrapping paper, tree decorations and much more. For example, architectural-inspired cufflinks by jewellery designer, Vicky Ambery Smith, who is well-known for her finely crafted interpretations of buildings from all over the world, would make the perfect gift for the man who has everything! And for a truly classical Christmas, we even have Piranesi-inspired wrapping paper and stylish baubles based on a beautiful design by Robert Adam from Soane's collection.

And what's even better, is that *all* shop sales will benefit Sir John Soane's Museum.

*If you haven't already visited the new shop, then we hope to see you soon! Otherwise, for further details and enquiries, please contact the Retail Manager, Oliver Perry (020 7440 4257, [operry@soane.org.uk](mailto:operry@soane.org.uk)) or visit our online shop: [www.soane.org/shop](http://www.soane.org/shop).*

OLIVER PERRY  
Retail Manager



The 2012 Soane Museum Christmas card designed by Charlotte Cory

## ‘Chère amie . . .’

On the south wall of the South Drawing Room, between the two right-hand openings into the loggia, hangs a melancholy pencil portrait of Mrs Soane by the sculptor John Flaxman, hardly more than a sketch and dwarfed by the two large oil portraits by William Owen of Soane and of his sons John and George on the east wall. Made in 1810, it was one of three pencil drawings by Flaxman used by John Jackson as models for his posthumous portrait of Mrs Soane, commissioned by Soane (fifteen years after her death) in 1828 and left unfinished after the artist’s death in 1831.

Some months later the drawing was presented to Soane by his friend J M W Turner on the occasion of his knighthood in September 1831, Turner having ‘fortunately obtained [it] at poor Jackson’s sale’ in which it had evidently been included by mistake. Under the drawing hangs a wooden tablet bearing an epitaph in French: *Chère amie, je ne peux plus entendre ta voix, – apprends moi ce que je dois faire – pour remplir tes souhaits!* (‘Dear friend, I can no longer hear your voice – teach me what I must do – to fulfill your wishes!’) The same inscription, hardly visible without the assistance of a torch, is found on the canopy of the model of the Soane family tomb in the Library-Dining Room. Although its presence in these locations connected with the death of his beloved wife indicates it was deeply meaningful to Soane, the source has remained a mystery, but a chance remark by the Museum Archivist, Susan Palmer, that she had always thought it sounded literary

prompted me to apply my skills as French literature graduate and librarian to the challenge. Google Books now contains millions of digitized texts forming a searchable corpus which I have used to identify the sources of inscriptions in Soane’s books, and I quickly identified a passage from the novel *Corinne, ou l’Italie* by Madame de Staël, first published in 1807: *O toi! dit-il en s’adressant au portrait de son père, toi, le meilleur ami que j’aurai jamais sur la terre, je ne peux plus entendre ta voix; mais apprends-moi par ce regard muet, si puissant encore sur mon âme, apprends-moi ce que je dois faire pour te donner dans le ciel quelque contentement de ton fils.* (‘Oh thou!’ he said, addressing the portrait of his father, ‘Thou, the best friend I shall ever have on earth, I can no longer hear your voice; but tell me by your mute gaze, still so powerful to my soul, tell me what I must do to give you in heaven some satisfaction in your son.’). Although little read now, Madame de Staël, the only daughter of the Swiss banker Jacques Necker, was a major intellectual figure of the early Romantic era, described by Byron as ‘the first female writer of this, or perhaps any age’, and well known for her opposition to Napoleon, who exiled her. Her second novel, *Corinne*, was an immediate and huge success across Europe for its portrayal of a new style of impetuous yet emotionally vulnerable literary heroine, and as a romantic travel guide to the Mediterranean. There are two copies of the book in Soane’s library. One of them, the London edition of 1808, must have been in Soane’s possession by 1826 when he had it rebound, and there is at least one marginal note attributable to him, but frustratingly, we have no record of when he acquired it, and any corresponding annotations on the endpapers according to his custom would have been lost in rebinding. A second copy published in Paris in 1818 was obtained in 1829 together with a copy of Madame de Staël’s first novel *Delphine*. Soane was not a great reader of novels, but may have been attracted to Madame de Staël’s book as a modern sentimental journey promising descriptions of the destinations of his grand tour decades earlier. This passage in which Corinne’s Scottish lover Oswald addresses the portrait of his father must have struck Soane, who as a keen lifelong student of French was easily capable of abridging it to suit his own needs.

STEPHANIE COANE  
Librarian

John Flaxman’s portrait of Eliza Soane, 1810



## Soane Travels: Exploring the Architecture and Design of Houses

In September this year, as part of its ‘Soane Travels’ programme, Sir John Soane’s Museum Foundation held one of its annual trips abroad, this time exploring the country houses of North Wales and the English counties of Shropshire and Staffordshire. Our group explored a total of 27 houses including two by Soane.

Here is a brief account by one of the participants of the tour, writer and journalist, Wendy Moonan, relating to one of these visits:

As a longtime supporter of the Sir John Soane Foundation in the US, years ago I made a startling observation: the only thing American architects agree about is that Sir John Soane was a genius. Soane’s appeal seems to be universal in America, whether the architect is a classicist like Robert A M Stern, a Modernist like Charlie Gwathmey, a Post-Modernist like Robert Venturi or a Deconstructivist like Frank Gehry. They all find inspiration in Soane’s work. Soane also seems to attract architecture aficionados of all ages and stripes.

Take the case of Bernard Goodwin, an engineer who in 2010 bought- at age 23 - a ruin of a Soane house in Shropshire

and has spent every spare hour since restoring it to its former glory. Soane built the handsome house, called Pell Wall (‘deep quarry’) in the 1820s for a friend, the wealthy iron merchant Purney Sillitoe. Thought to be Soane’s last private house commission, it was also one of his proudest, about which he wrote: ‘In composing plans for this villa my best energies have been exerted, intending that when complete my professional labours should cease.’

Coincidentally, Goodwin (called ‘Gooders’ by his friends) is in the same business as the man who commissioned the house. He works at his family’s iron foundry, the Goodwin Group, which was founded in 1883. He is the sixth generation of the family to run it. ‘I found out that the guy who asked Sir John Soane to build him a house was an iron founder from Telford who traded steel in London’, he told the BBC news at the time of the purchase. ‘I work in a steel foundry in Stoke; I thought that was a nice connection.’

Goodwin, a natural problem solver, embraced a huge challenge. The house was not only neglected by a series of

Exterior view of Pell Wall, in course of restoration, built by Soane in 1822–28



owners over the last 200 years, including a Catholic order and an underwear company, but it was also severely damaged by a fire in 1986. The Pell Wall Preservation Trust did what they could in the 1990s, but what Goodwin bought was a 15-by-10-metre boarded-up shell comprising five ground-floor rooms, six first-floor rooms, six second-floor rooms and a huge cellar. It had lost much of the original interior.

Considering his huge commitment to the house, it is ironic that Goodwin did not know who Soane was when he first surveyed the place. He was attracted to its scale and light-filled spaces. Then he did his research and contacted the Museum to study Soane's original plans, so he could 're-instate the residence in keeping with the drawings'.

Two years on, he has now finished Phase I of the restoration process, which included adding a new roof that required 45 tons of lead, strengthening the exterior walls, replacing 35 large 12-pane windows, stripping the interior walls down to the original brick, installing new plumbing, electricity, security systems, wide-plank wood floors with radiant heating, a state-of-the-art modern kitchen and glamorous master bath.

He has painstakingly copied Soane period details: simply detailed wainscoting that is flush with the new plaster walls, new plasterwork beading in the arched doorways, incised lines within the pilasters and bays of arched windows on the front façade. He moved into the house this past June.

In September, Goodwin welcomed a group of Americans (including me) on an architecture tour organized by the Soane Foundation. After walking us through the immaculately restored rooms at the rear of the house, complete with Chesney reproductions of the original Soane fireplace mantelpieces, he shared some of the trials and tribulations of the restoration process.

'Before I had insurance, the lead for the roof was stolen

twice in the first year', he said. 'You simply cannot budget for these kinds of things.'

Nonetheless, with a security system firmly in place, he is ready to embark on Phase II: the remaining 'state rooms' including the drawing room, living room, library and guest rooms.

While the kitchen and master bath are contemporary, he plans to furnish the house with antiques appropriate to its age. 'The dining room will have period features', he said. 'I like the Regency aesthetic; it's quite special.'

He has also invested a considerable amount of effort into the landscape, whose original, 1820s plan is attributed to William Sawrey Gilpin, an artist who turned to gardening at age 60. In this, Goodwin has a particularly close source for advice. His Venezuelan mother, Elizabeth Goodwin, is both an architect and a landscape architect. She has supervised a planting programme that is already in place. One can now appreciate the house in all its glory from the entrance off the main road; the view shed has been recreated. Not that Goodwin is in a desperate hurry. Asked how long Phase II may take, Goodwin cheerfully replied, 'probably another ten years'. Now that's the Soanean spirit for you!

*In October 2013 the Soane Foundation will be travelling 'in the footsteps of Soane' by touring Rome and Naples and exploring the best of Italy's great urban palazzi, country houses, contemporary architecture, historic churches and more. Their explorations will start on the afternoon of Saturday 5 October in Rome and continue for seven nights, concluding in Naples. The Foundation welcomes supporters of the Museum to consider joining them for one of their future trips. If you are interested, please contact the Executive Director of the Soane Foundation, Chas Miller, for further details:*

*00-1-212-223-2012 chas@soanefoundation.com*

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