

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER NO.19

A SPECIAL EDITION

*Celebrating new research facilities
at Sir John Soane's Museum:
The Soane Resesarch Library
The Adam Study Centre
and Soane Archive*



Letter from the Director

The move from the old Research Library in No.12 – an epic undertaking which involved the transfer of thousands of books and drawings, several huge items of mahogany library furniture, computers, files and other equipment, to say nothing of the curators themselves, with years of accumulated research – took the entire summer, during which time the Library had to remain closed. We thank all our users for their patience while this move took place.

Your reward is the new Soane Museum Research Library, larger and more spacious over two floors, which can accommodate twice as many readers and provides better facilities for housing the collections. It is also rather stylish, the principal reading room being a pair of Soane-designed drawing rooms, preserving a distinctive starfish ceiling trimmed with Soane's distinctive 'bead' mouldings, marble chimney-pieces, and splendid mahogany doors and shutters inlaid with ebony.

Some visitors have been alarmed by the pink walls and vault – in a vaguely medicinal shade of 'germoline pink' – but this faithfully reproduces the colour that was found in paint analysis. In fact, we have grown to rather like it, and it works well with the mahogany furniture. Most of the Library furniture dates from the 1920s and was commissioned by Curator A T Bolton, but we have supplemented it with new shelving, especially made to match. Although the new Library has state-of-the-art security and fire protection, and blinds and UV film have been fitted on the windows, we were keen that it should not look too institutional. Indeed, No.14 provides an ideal setting for the display of items added to the collection over the years – Soane's own possessions remain in the historic displays in his house-museum.

Thus the old boarded floors are combined with old Mahal carpets – the largest one having once graced the Dining Room at Strawberry Hill – and the walls are hung with portraits and framed memorial cards commemorating past Curators. Particularly handsome is Charles Martin's portrait of *Joseph Bonomi* (Curator 1861–78) deciphering the Sarcophagus of Seti I, hung over the chimney-piece, kindly lent to us by one of his descendants. On the mantelshelf below we have placed a



The Senior and Carmichael cabinets, which house the 57 albums of architectural drawings by Robert and James Adam, as they look in their new home in the Adam Study Centre

glass case containing fragments of the lid of the sarcophagus, presented to the Museum by Professor Wiedmann of Bonn in 1910. From another wall *Sir John Summerson* presides over the researchers, a striking likeness painted by his friend and muse, Nancy Spender, while his successors, Peter Thornton and Margaret Richardson, are represented by framed photographs. Together they form a fine display, and celebrate the contribution of the custodians of the Museum.

Upstairs, the Adam Study Centre is fitted up with Senior and Carmichael's specially made cabinets for the 57 albums of architectural drawings by Robert and James Adam. Beautifully made of black American walnut, they provide optimum conditions for the preservation of these fragile and much consulted volumes. This room is painted an Adamish pea green, and is hung with Giuseppe Vasi's huge 1765 engraved panorama of Rome and several outsize Adam drawings. A plaster lion's mask, a fragment salvaged from the 1956 demolition of the Big House at Bowood, keeps an eye on readers from the mantelpiece. There are still major tasks ahead unpacking and sorting files, and other thought-provoking curios will doubtless be added to the display, but in the meantime the new Library makes for a very congenial setting for research into Soane and his collections.

As well as the new education facilities and Library, No.14 also provides new staff offices, including those of the Director, Deputy Director and Development Team. Conversion of the former staff flat above No.13 into offices means that the staff are now all located on the top floors of the three houses that now constitute the Museum. This project, generously sponsored by the DCMS, means that all the staff now work alongside each other – instead of perching in oubliettes all over the building as before. Central to the new arrangements is the new staff common room, located in what was once a servants' garret on the top floor of No.13. Layers of wallpaper have been removed to reveal this as a fine panelled room, and it is now home to an impressive circular table, purchased for the use of the Trustees in 1838. The room will be hung with the pictures that were here in Soane's day.

Other new facilities include the new Soane Archive, occupying two rooms at the top of No.12, at last properly equipped with archival shelving, and a new studio for photography of items in the collection. By moving the staff offices upstairs, this frees up the rooms on the second floor which once housed Soane's private apartments. The restoration of these rooms – Soane's Bedroom and Bathroom, his Oratory, Model Room and Mrs Soane's Morning Room – is one of the principal objectives of the Museum's *Opening up the Soane* project.

But what of the old Research Library in No.12 Lincoln's Inn Fields? This splendid room – the first floor counterpart to the yellow South Drawing Room in No.13 – has been cleared and cleaned in preparation for the installation of an exhibition explaining our plans for the Museum's *Opening up the Soane* project. This means that every visitor can learn about what is in store. Next door we will install a new temporary shop,

taking merchandise out of the heart of the Museum and relocating it near the end of your tour. We hope to install this early in the New Year.

Meanwhile, a programme of repairs to the lanterns and skylights has been in progress, repairing the inevitable leaks and reinstating panes of yellow glass. The specially made yellow glass comes in two shades, a dark ochre and a pale primrose, and putting them back returns the mellow *lumière mystérieuse* that Soane so delighted in to the Museum. We are also still trying to raise matching funding – £40,000 – to

embark upon the West Chamber project, which will equip the Museum with a properly equipped conservation store, as well as reinstate, to the west of the Sarcophagus, a long-lost lapidary arrangement – a sort of triumphal arch of curious sculptured fragments.

I hope you will enjoy this latest issue of Sir John Soane's Museum Newsletter, which gives you the latest news of the Museum's cataloguing projects, and highlights some of the unexpected treasures of the Library.

TIM KNOX
November 2008

A Unique Survival

Sue Palmer, Archivist to Sir John Soane's Museum, on the scope of the library, archive and drawings

That Soane was an inveterate collector is evident to visitors as soon as they set foot inside his Museum at No.13 Lincoln's Inn Fields. What is on view, however, is only part of the collection, for stored in cases and chests all over Nos 12–14 Lincoln's Inn Fields are some 7,000 books, 30,000 architectural and topographical drawings and an extensive business and personal archive.

Soane's Library is the only known professional library of an architect of the early 19th century to survive, and, like the rest of the collection, has not been added to since his death in January 1837 (though a small working library of modern books has been built up in recent years for the use of staff and researchers). The earliest acquisitions were school books, passed on to him by his brother and sisters, amusingly annotated in the manner of schoolboys the world over. A few date from his days as a student at the Royal Academy and his subsequent travels in Italy, but he began to buy in earnest after inheriting a substantial sum of money from his wife's uncle and guardian in 1790 and continued to do so right up until his death.

Many of the books on art and architecture were purchased to aid the extensive research that went into the composition of his lectures as Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy, and also served as a teaching tool and visual resource for the pupils in his office. He took a particular pleasure in acquiring 'association' copies such as Robert Adam's copy of Palladio's *Quattro Libri* or Sir William Chambers's annotated copy of Fréart's *Parallele de l'architecture*.

Stars of the collection include 11 illuminated manuscripts – Books of Hours, a Josephus illuminated by Giulio Clovio and a 13th-century bible – and all four folios of Shakespeare's plays. There are also a few incunabula (books printed before 1501) including Landino's *Commentario sopra la commedia di Danthe*, published in Florence in 1481, with a fine early nineteenth-century binding by Kalthoerber.

Travel books, dictionaries, novels, poetry, religion, politics, gardening and even cookery are also represented in the collection.

Exceptionally, not only are the books preserved in their original setting but also surviving are numerous sale

catalogues, booksellers' lists, prospectuses, bill and receipts which enable us to say, in the case of many books, when and where Soane purchased them and for how much.

It is impossible to do justice to such an important library in a short piece and for anyone interested in finding out more, the following reading is recommended:

Eileen Harris 'Sir John Soane's Library: "O, Books! Ye Monuments of Mind"' in *Apollo*, April 1990; David Watkin *Enlightenment Thought: Sir John Soane and the Royal Academy Lectures*, Cambridge University Press, 1996 and Eileen Harris and Nicholas Savage eds *Hooked on Books: The Library of Sir John Soane, Architect 1753–1837*, Sir John Soane's Museum, 2004.

The backbone of Soane's Drawings Collection is, of course, the work done in the course of his architectural practice, from 1780, when he returned from Italy, to 1834, the year in which he designed his last building. These range from one or two drawings for early schemes or commissions that did not materialise, to almost 2,000 drawings for the Bank of England, where Soane was architect for 45 years from 1788 to 1833. They range, too, from rough pen and ink sketches in Soane's own hand to large watercolour perspectives presenting schemes to clients or recording the finished building, over which his pupils laboured for many days.

The collection includes several notebooks and sketchbooks compiled by Soane when travelling in Italy between 1778 and 1780. There are, too, over 1,000 large-scale drawings made by his pupils to illustrate his Royal Academy lectures – many copied from illustrations in books in his Library and others drawn on the spot in and around London. Furthermore, there are many views of the interiors of Soane's house and Museum done over the course of the years by his pupils as drawing exercises, and a vital aid to us now in the interpretation of Soane's arrangements.

But, perhaps not surprisingly, Soane collected drawings by other architects as well. Of these, the largest collection is 57 volumes of drawings from the office of Robert and James Adam, purchased by Soane in 1833, some years after the brothers' deaths. Soane also purchased a number of drawings at Sir William Chambers's sale and at the sale of the effects of James Playfair. Very near the end of his life he acquired

Moving Matters . . . the Research Library

Stephen Astley, Curator of Drawings, looks back on the delicate and challenging process of moving the Museum's Research Library, which has taken place over the last months.

After a year of planning and a seven-month closure the Museum's Research Library has now reopened to visitors at No.14 Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Moving was a complex process, which started with the books from Soane's library being removed from the cases on the first floor of No.12 and packed in large plastic crates, each book having been individually wrapped in acid-free tissue paper. At this point, as the builders were still working on No.14, there was no space in the Museum to store the crates. We were also concerned about the floor loadings in buildings designed during the Regency for domestic uses. Practically, this meant that the crates had to be taken in stages to off-site storage. This delicate first step was handled by Harrow Green Ltd, a company with plenty of experience in moving historic libraries having previously transported the British Library from the its old home in the British Museum to St Pancras.

Also to be moved were the 57 volumes containing 9,000 drawings from the practice of Robert and James Adam. These were carried by hand to the new Adam Study Centre on the second floor of No.14. Each was placed in allocated spaces in purpose built cabinets designed and made by Rupert Senior and Charles Carmichael (Senior & Carmichael Ltd).

Made of American black walnut with nickel silver trim, the cabinets not only look superb, but meet all modern conservation requirements. Sir John would no doubt have approved of the design and craftsmanship. Our thanks are due to The Rootstein Hopkins Foundation, The Elizabeth Cayzer Charitable Trust and the Wolfson/DCMS Galleries Improvement Fund for their help in the commissioning of these new cabinets.

Another other element of the collection on the move was the drawings collection, the vast majority of which was stored in plan chests in the old library. Within the drawers the drawings are stored in sets, or groups, much as they were on Soane's death in 1837. In the early years of the last century most sets had been put in paper wrappers which were now torn – not protecting the drawings and not meeting modern conservation requirements.

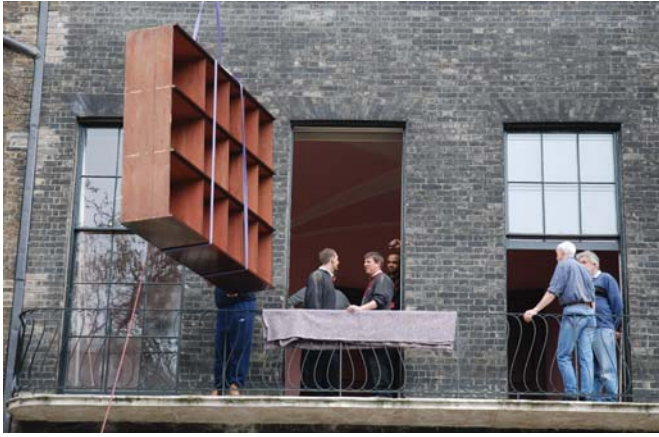
Each set of drawings was measured and new folders commissioned. Once emptied, the plan chests, designed in the 1920s by the then curator, Arthur Bolton, were carefully dismantled by Arlington Conservation and taken to their workshops to be refurbished. This mostly meant easing the movement of the drawers, many of which were now difficult



Senior and Carmichael deliver one of the cabinets. Photo: Graham Price



The crane in action



A bookcase enters No.14

to open. One particularly large plan chest had been extended in the 1980s but now proved inadequate to the task, the sagging centre making it impossible to close the drawers. The ingenious solution to this was to turn the major part of the cabinet upside down, a job again done by Arlington Conservation.

Arthur Bolton's three very large bookcases were next on the list. These were dismantled, but the pieces were still so large that they would not fit down the staircases. The only way to move them was through the windows!

A crane was hired, and three windows removed, one on the first floor of No.12 and one on both the first and second floors of No.14. In what proved to be a surprisingly quick and smooth operation the largest pieces of the bookcases were lifted out of the old library and neatly slotted through the appropriate windows of No.14. At the same time the refurbished plan chests were also craned in.

Arlington Conservation then re-assembled the plan chests and bookcases. It was gratifying to see how well Bolton's carefully Soanean designs fitted their new home, the panelling on the bookcase doors echoing the Soane doors and shutter box covers of No.14.

Once the drawings had been carried across to No.14 they were placed in their new folders, each labelled with a copy of Walter Spiers's Edwardian folder labels, and replaced in their

appropriate drawers. The books were returned from storage and again replaced in their cases. All that remained was to hang pictures; in the new library those of the previous Curators, and Adam drawings in the Adam Study Centre.

We reopened the library to visitors about a month ago, originally under bare light bulbs, but now under chandeliers, appropriate to the original intended use of the room – a drawing room.

Of course the library move is just one part of a much bigger picture. Releasing its old rooms on the first floor of No.12 Lincoln's Inn Fields is one of the keys to the next stage of the Soane's Master Plan, *Opening up the Soane*. These rooms will shortly open to visitors with a temporary display on our future plans, but will eventually become the new home of a larger gallery.

STEPHEN ASTLEY



One of the Bolton bookcases in its new home in No.14

A Catalogue of Treasures

Since early 2007, Librarian Stephie Coane has been cataloguing Soane's Library, publishing entries online. Here she describes the process and highlights some favourite 'discoveries'.

If you are holding this *Newsletter* in your hands, the diversity of the Soane Museum's myriad collections probably needs no introduction, but some of our holdings, less obvious to the casual visitor dazed by the riches of the house, remain largely unseen. This is especially the case for Soane's collections of drawings and books, the latter mostly experienced as gold-tooled calf spines glimpsed through the glazed bookcases or suspected behind cupboard doors.

Until recently library visitors had to consult a photocopy of Arthur Bolton's hand-written book catalogue dating back

to the 1920s, or the even older catalogues printed in 1844 and 1878. To make the riches of Soane's library more accessible, in 1986 a new catalogue of the 'Architectural Library' was begun by Eileen Harris and Nick Savage. This continued on a part-time basis as funds permitted; in 2003 Stephen Massil was appointed for a three-year contract to catalogue the other half of Soane's books, the so-called 'General Library'.

In 2005 the business decision was made not to publish this catalogue as a book as originally intended, but to make it freely available online via the Museum's website, and this

is where I come in. With original cataloguing nearing completion, thanks to a generous grant from the John R. Murray Charitable Trust, in early 2007 I was appointed as Librarian on a fixed-term contract to edit the catalogue entries for online publication.

There is only one way to start cataloguing: with the book. This is particularly true of books from the hand-press period; going back to the shelves also creates an opportunity to make sure no books have been missed, do a stock-take and check for urgent conservation needs. An important part of my work is trying to draw out the connections between the books themselves, and with other objects or archival documents in the collection. I have even made the odd new discovery, such as the survival in two architectural volumes, underneath Soane's own bookplates, of the bookplates of John Wood, the Bath architect and town planner one of whose manuscripts is also in the library

Over a thousand catalogue entries are now online, with more being added each week, finally offering the general public a glimpse of the riches behind the glazed doors of the bookcases – even if they cannot come to the library or even the museum.

Variety being the spice of life, I have been working on books from different parts of the Museum: approximately a third of the books in the No.13 Breakfast Parlour, all those in the South Drawing Room, and most of those in the North Drawing Room. The published entries include Harris and Savage's recent work on Soane's exceptionally interesting collection of engravings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (whom Soane had met in Rome during his Grand Tour), to which we hope to add images as soon as funds will allow. At the time of writing I am working on the architectural books in the handsome mahogany book-presses that followed the research library to No.14, where their design, patterned by Arthur Bolton on the doors in the North Drawing Room in No.13, now beautifully complements their new home in what must be one of the best offices in London!

... A few of my favourite things

During my first year at the Soane, while editing the catalogue and publishing it online book by book, I've been privileged to handle some gorgeous volumes and others whose drab exterior concealed discoveries just as intriguing. Over a thousand titles are now accessible from the Soane Museum website – and soon we hope to add images to enhance the catalogue. Here are some of the treasures that caught my imagination.

Afbeelding van in- en uitlandsche houten. – Amsterdam, 1773

Afbeelding der marmor soorten. – Amsterdam, 1776

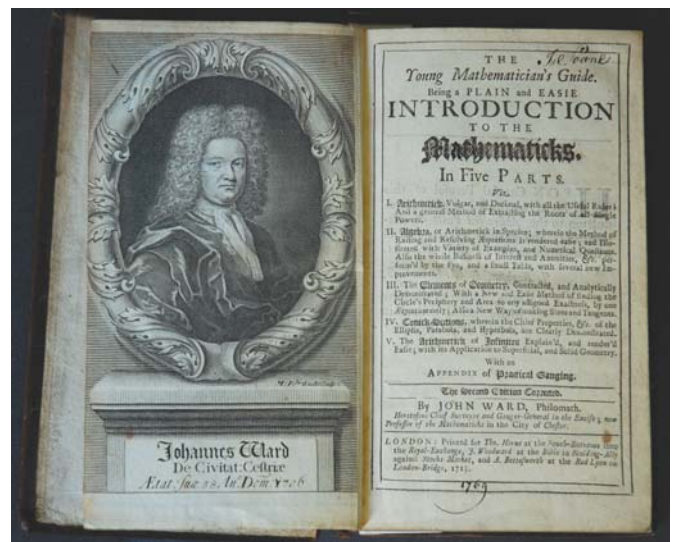
Both published by the bookseller and publisher Jan Christiaan Sepp and bound together in an early C19th diced Russia binding. We don't know when Soane acquired these (a previous owner's name, Mary Bowes, is inscribed on the title-page) but it's easy to see why: the 144 beautifully hand-coloured etched plates depicting hundreds of varieties of exotic woods and



marbles would have appealed to Soane who used a variety of wood-grain and marble effects in his house, for example in the Breakfast Parlour and on the front stairs.

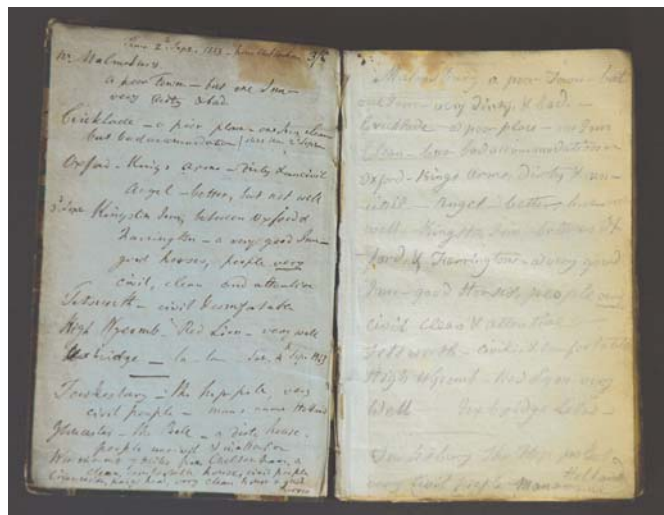
John Ward, *The young mathematician's guide. Being a plain and easie introduction to the mathematicks.* – The second edition corrected. – London, 1713

Soane's library doesn't just contain the stars of a bibliophile's collection, but also more modest workmanlike volumes that have seen a lot of wear and tear. Soane bought his copy of this popular primer in March 1769, when he was 15 and living in the household of George Dance the younger as the



fashionable architect's office boy and presumably couldn't afford a newer edition. Like any teenager he inscribed his name on it: on the front fly-leaf with the date of purchase and on the title-page, taking elaborate care with his penmanship (as I remember doing myself at the same age). In 1783 or later, he even went back and added the final 'e' to his surname. He also initialled the rear fly-leaf with Dance's address and noted the price (2 shillings), next to a small doodle of a stylized face which occurs in other books owned by him at this time.

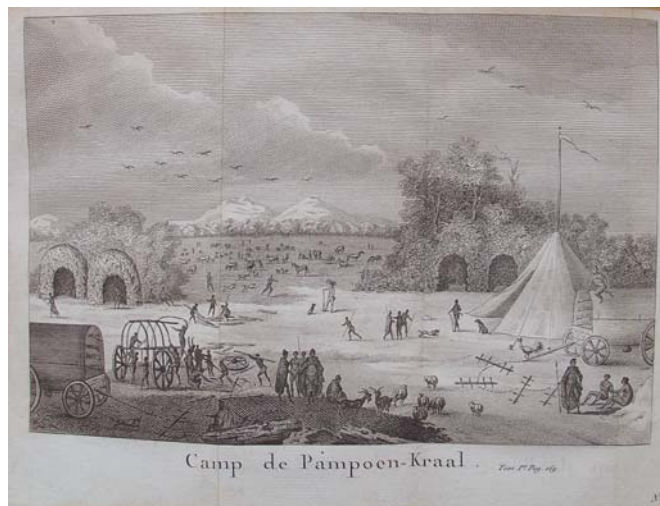
Daniel Paterson, *A new and accurate description of all the direct and principal cross roads in England and Wales*. – The tenth edition. – London, 1794



Pocket-sized road-books such as this were the portable Michelin road atlases of the day, giving routes from London with mileages, details of crossroads and a table of post-chaise charges. The fly-leaves of this copy are annotated by Soane outlining some key routes. Further notes by Mrs Soane give the names of towns and inns between Cheltenham and Uxbridge and between Tewkesbury and Cheltenham with comments such as 'Oxford – King's Arms – dirty & uncivil/ Angel – better, but not well. Kingston Inn between Oxford, & Farrington – a very good Inn – good Horses, people very civil clean & attentive.'

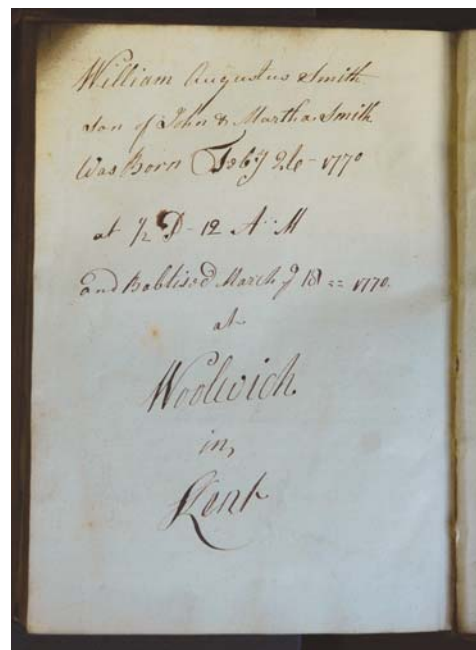
François Le Vaillant, *Voyage de Monsieur Le Vaillant dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique, par le Cap de Bonne-Espérance*. – Paris, 1790

Soane's collection of travels mostly contains works of obvious interest to an architect – accounts of the British Isles, Europe and the Levant – so it was an unexpected surprise to discover one of the books featured in my doctoral dissertation on eighteenth-century French explorers in the No.13 Breakfast Parlour! Le Vaillant was a Surinam-born French traveller and naturalist who published very popular, much-translated but somewhat fictionalised accounts of his travels in South Africa, as well as a number of beautifully illustrated works



of ornithology. Perhaps Soane was intrigued by the images of primitive African huts in some of the plates, or by the engravings of giraffes?

William Sutherland, *The ship-builder's assistant; or, marine architecture*. – London, 1755



One of the delights of working in a library like Soane's is that so many of the books bear visible traces of former owners who sometimes spring to life in one's imagination. This rather battered book had belonged to one John Smith of 'his Majestyes Riggin house Woolwich Kent', who acquired it on January 13, 1770; a few weeks later a proud new father added another note at the back of the book: 'William Augustus Smith son of John & Martha Smith Was Born Feb'y. 26-1770 at 1/2 D -12 A.M and Bap'tised March y^e 18 1770 at Woolwich in Kent.'

STEPHIE COANE

Adam Online

Curator of Drawings Stephen Astley introduces the first of the Soane's new online catalogues of Adam drawings.

Visitors to the increasingly popular museum website, www.soane.org, are now able to access the first of the new catalogues of Adam drawings. The catalogue has been written by Professor A. A. Tait and deals with the small number of early Scottish drawings, but the bulk of it is the drawings from the two Grand Tours made by first Robert, and subsequently by his younger brother James Adam. This online catalogue has been generously supported by Gisela Gledhill in memory of her late husband, Richard Harris. Other contributions were given by The Dunard Fund and The Furthemore Foundation; and our thanks are due to all of these benefactors.

These drawings show a vital component of what was to become the Adam style. To the very Scottish influences of his father's architectural practice, Adam on his Grand Tour was able to add firsthand experience of both the fabled works of the ancients (something his father could only read about), and an admiration for French domestic planning. The experiences gained through his travels were to be overwhelming and lifelong. While in Italy Adam quickly built a team of artists and architects whom he paid both to record Rome and to teach him. Professor Tait's catalogue attributes many previously unattributed drawings to this team and illuminates Adam's deliberate and careful self re-invention.

To celebrate the completion of his cataloguing project

Professor Tait has curated an exhibition at the Soane Museum (*The Adam Brothers in Rome: Drawings from the Grand Tour*, open until 14 February 2009) enabling visitors to see at first hand the pick of these drawings. This is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated book.

The decision to catalogue online rather than in conventionally published books was made early in the directorship of Tim Knox. While the museum had published award-winning catalogues of Italian Renaissance and then George Dance's drawings, the economics of conventional publication meant that fewer and fewer drawings could be illustrated, and the cost – and necessary subsidy – for each volume was increasing rapidly, pushing the purchase price beyond libraries of all but a few.

Publishing online means all these problems can be addressed. Every drawing can be illustrated and in colour. A thumbnail image is provided with the catalogue text. Clicking this produces a larger, screen-sized but watermarked image. The catalogue can be rapidly searched, and will be compatible with the future catalogues of all other aspects of the collection. Publishing online means that all future Soane Museum catalogues will be available world-wide and free.

We believe this is the first time that full cataloguing of a major drawings collection has been attempted online. Dr



A fantasy landscape by Robert Adam

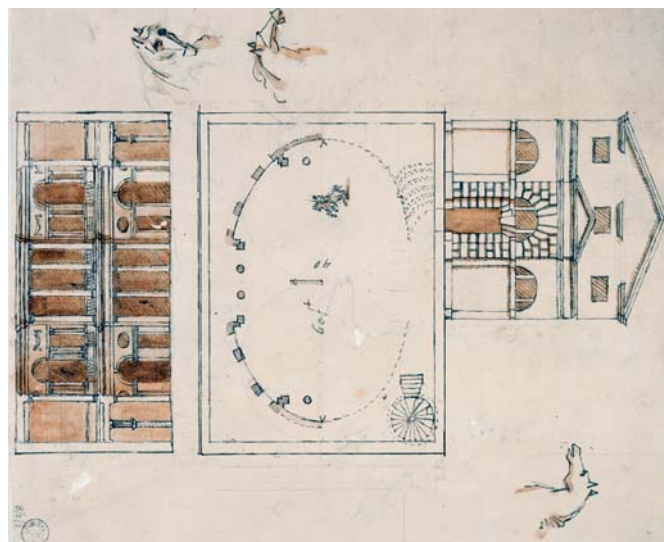
Gordon Higgott's online catalogue of the first part of his work on the Soane's Baroque drawings is already available. Something of an experiment for the Museum, it is intended that the smaller images will soon be replaced with larger ones, similar to those in the Adam catalogue. These in turn will soon be joined by Jill Lever's catalogue of early drawings by Soane himself, work having now been completed on both his student drawings and the drawings from his scholarship tour of Italy.

... a few of my favourite things

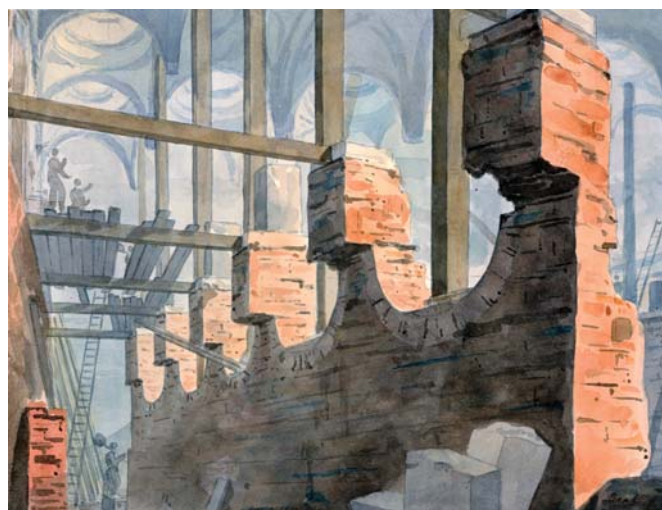
Stephen Astley describes his most favourite drawings from Soane's collection

In addition to being an architect, Robert Adam (1728–92) was also a watercolour artist of note. One of his obituaries made almost as much of his paintings as his buildings. Most of his pictures, such as this, are explorations of the picturesque, usually involving fortified buildings, water and mountains, so combining elements from his native Scotland, his Italian Grand Tour and his return by boat down the Rhine. Adam was a prolific artist. At the height of the Adelphi crisis, when it looked as if parts of his business were going to fail, he gave 1,000 such drawings to his sisters, to protect them from possible creditors. (SM 68/1/2) (see previous page)

William Kent (1685–1748) trained as a painter rather than an architect, so on his grand Tour spent only one night in Vicenza, the epicentre of Palladio's work. This design for a riding house of the early 1730s is possibly connected with his work on the Royal Mews at Charing Cross. It shows his habitual inability to resist doodling in the margins of his drawings. It also shows Kent still learning the conventions of what was to become a standard eighteenth-century drawing format, where the plan is in the centre of the sheet and the internal elevations are 'exploded' or splayed around it. Here the single internal elevation is placed correctly in relation to the plan. The external end elevation is placed, confusingly, halfway down on side of the plan. (SM 8/2/3)

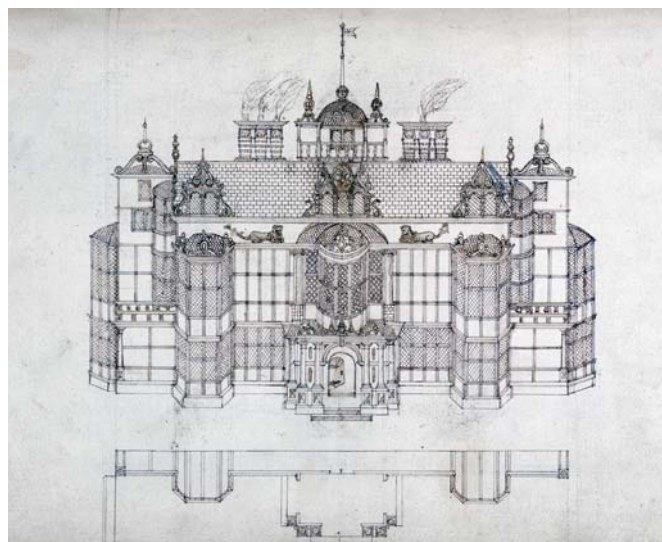


One of the tasks of pupils in Soane's office was the unique practice of drawing buildings in construction. This drawing by Arthur Mee shows the partial demolition of the Old 4% Office of the Bank of England. Built by Sir Robert Taylor, Soane retained only the foundations and inverted brick arches, which were to serve as supports for his new stone piers. Mee is sitting in the basement, and depicts the almost Piranesian scene with a strong use of light and colour. (SM vol.60/31)



The album of drawings attributed to John Thorpe (c.1565 – ?1655) is one of the great treasures of the Museum. Born into a dynasty of stone masons and surveyors, Thorpe's album contains drawings by many hands. This design drawing shows Campden House, Kensington, although not as executed. The house was built for Sir Baptist Hicks, a wealthy money-lender and Government contractor in c.1621. It demonstrates Thorpe's interest in the rapidly developing art of the architectural perspective. Smoke issues from many of the chimneys, perhaps a sign of conspicuous consumption. The house was destroyed by fire on 23 March 1862. (SM vol.101/95)

STEPHEN ASTLEY



Red Herrings, Rare Volumes and Research

As an exceptional scholarly resource the Soane Library receives a constant stream of enquiries and visitors.

Librarian Stephie Coane recalls some recent surprises:

The very first book-related library enquiry I received on taking up the post of Librarian at Sir John Soane's Museum was a baptism of fire. A gentleman enquired about a book published in 1786 by Henry James Kitchen, an architect from Ewell near Epsom in Surrey. Apparently the Soane possessed the only surviving copy of this work. I fruitlessly searched the library database, drew a blank on Bolton's manuscript catalogue, and asked more experienced colleagues, to no avail. It was not until four months later that an apologetic email arrived from the editor of *The Private Library*, confessing that an April Fools issue of that journal, containing only spoof, joke and false material, had included an article about Kitchen and his book (which does not exist), with a note that a copy was, at one time, in Soane's library (which is untrue).

By then, of course, I had realized that nothing should surprise me at the Soane!

Most visitors to the Research Library come to study the 30,000-odd drawings in Soane's collection, but, as the project of publishing the library catalogue on the Museum website progresses, we naturally hope to see more interest in the riches of Soane's book collection and the valuable information in the Archives about his book-buying and related activities.

Already the publication of the entries connected with the *Hooked on Books* exhibition, indexed by Google, has raised awareness of some of the Museum's unseen treasures. Readers of recent *Newsletters* may recall that in October 2007 five descendants of the nineteenth-century bookbinder John Mackinlay (1745–1821), accompanied by two spouses, converged on London from three continents to view their ancestor's handiwork as represented by the sumptuous gold

and blind-tooled olive-green morocco binding on Soane's copy of Shakespeare's famous 'First Folio'.

In November, with the Research Library closed in preparation for the move, we made a special exception to permit Holly Luhnig, a Canadian PhD student and Visiting Fellow at Chawton House Library in Hampshire researching the early works of the novelist Eliza Haywood (1693?–1756), to study the Soane copy of *Fatal Fondness: or, Love its own opposer* (London, 1725). We were delighted to learn that this book, which must have belonged to Mrs Soane, is the only surviving copy of this edition of the text to have been traced.

Over the summer, while awaiting completion of the decoration, furniture and fittings of No.14, we were still able to welcome two scholars of bookbindings to survey different aspects of the bindings in Soane's library. Professor Jonathan Hill undertook a survey of books in boards in the collection as part of his research into this transitional period in trade bookbinding. It was fascinating to learn how some of these books, so drab now, must have been attractive objects before the colours faded, and this may explain why Soane seems to have left many of these books in their original covers rather than having them rebound in leather.

Philip Oldfield of the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library in Toronto visited us to catalogue the armorial bindings in Soane's collection for a forthcoming online database of British armorial stamps. There was a moment of excitement when one binding was identified as having belonged to a Henry Holland – but this turned out to refer to Henry Fox, 1st Baron Holland, rather than the architect who employed Soane as his pupil.

STEPHIE COANE

Moving Matters . . . the Soane Archive

Museum Archivist, Sue Palmer, on the newly refurbished and enlarged storage space for the Archives

In parallel with the books and drawings, Soane's archives have also been on the move this year. The need for complete overhaul and renewal of the services at the top of No.12 Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the Archive Room has been located since the late 1980s, presented an excellent opportunity of upgrading and extending the storage space and making it as compliant as possible (within the constraints of an eighteenth-century Grade I listed building) with professional standards for the storage of archives. This important refurbishment project was made possible by a generous grant from The Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Firstly, however, the room had to be packed up and completely emptied, and I spent six back-breaking weeks at the beginning of the year achieving this, including tackling a large backlog of modern management files which needed

classifying, boxing and labelling.

Six months of camping out elsewhere in the building have, however, been rewarded with a lovely, light, clean and calm space with new and extended shelving for the Soane Archive. The post-Soane Archive – the records of the Museum from 1837 to the present – has acquired a whole extra room, cleverly adapted by Sean Buick of Julian Harrap Architects from a rather awkwardly shaped lavatory and an office previously inhabited by the Museum's Finance Officer (now happily ensconced on the third floor of No.14).

The tremendous floor-loading of the boxes of records presented a big challenge, and the architect's ingenious solution has been to put steels in the floor above and hang the shelving from those. The shelving is also double-depth, greatly increasing the storage capacity of the room.

... and a few of my favourite things

Although demonstrably not the most important documents within the Archive, some of my personal favourites are the many domestic bills and advertising flyers, often including eye-catching engraved scenes, which have enabled us to build up a very complete picture of the Soane family's domestic life. Some examples are illustrated here.

SUE PALMER

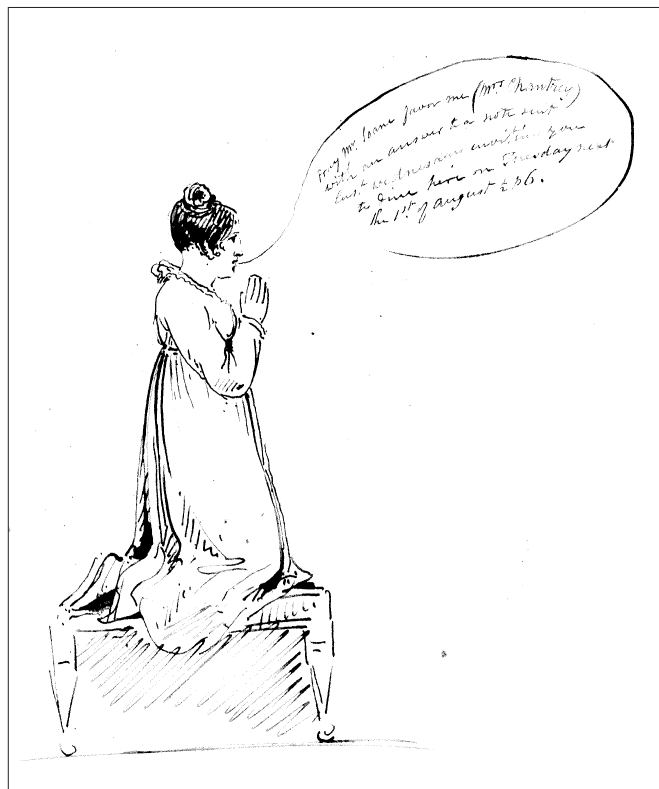
BEAUTY OF PERSON.
—○—
DAVISON'S
celebrated original
PALMYRENE
OR
VIOLET-SCENTED SOAP,
For softening, beautifying, and preventing the Skin from chapping.
PRICE 1s. THE SQUARE.

●●●●●●●●●●

THE acknowledged and evident superiority of this Soap having occasioned many imitations, families are particularly requested to direct for DAVISON'S original PALMYRENE OR VIOLET SCENTED SOAP, sold in London only, at their manufactory,
No. 59, FLEET STREET,
and by one principal trader in every chief town and fashionable watering place in England, Scotland, and Ireland.
Merchants or Tradesmen having orders for a quantity of this Soap, are particularly requested to apply at their manufactory, in Fleet Street, where they will be supplied on the most liberal terms, and be certain of obtaining the genuine article.
DAVISON'S fashionable and elegant EXTRACT, or OTTO OF ROSES, is considerably improved in fragrance, and sold at 2s. 4s 6d. and 9s. the bottle.
Evans and Ruffy, Printers, 29, Budge Row, Wallbrook.

Advertisement for Davison's Palmyrene Soap


Bill for a variety of household brushes. Some brushes would be made of pig bristles, hence the illustration in the bill-head



Request from Mrs Chantrey, wife of the sculptor Francis Chantrey, for a reply to her invitation to dinner

Pray Mr Soane favour me (Mrs Chantrey) with an answer to a note sent last Wednesday inviting you to dine here on Tuesday next the 1st of August - 1/2 p6

Mr Soane London 28 July 1866

 **Bo. of B. Bishop**
BRUSH MANUFACTURER
No. 208 High Holborn.
Opposite Bloombury Square.

2 Brooms ————— a 9
1 Banister B. 2/2/6 a 4s 0
1 Stone Brush ————— a 1 9
Carpet Broom ————— a 1 0
Recd. for B. Bishop
& Bishop a 19 9

B. Bishop