“From the start both new Professors (Soane and Turner) planned to illustrate their lectures with large numbers of watercolor diagrams: more than 1,000 survive in Sir John Soane’s Museum today and there are about 100 in the Turner Bequest. Soane and Turner are said to have collaborated on these and it is suggested that this was the case. On 3 July 1809, for example, Soane’s Notebook records ‘At home all day writing lectures. Mr. Turner dined here’; they must have been exchanging ideas. Both had a taste for quoting doggerel, on occasion using the same verses. An extraordinary drawing prepared for Soane’s Lecture IX, by an unknown draughtsman and of unknown date, presents

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Sir John Soane’s Museum Foundation in the United States is ratcheting up its fundraising efforts to preserve Soane’s strange and idiosyncratic creation. Sir John Soane’s Museum Foundation in the United States is ratcheting up its fundraising efforts to preserve Soane’s strange and idiosyncratic creation.

We invite readers of this newsletter who would like to help to call or e-mail Chas Miller at (212) 223-2012, chas@soanefoundation.com.


The Soane Foundation has just announced a major fundraising appeal, the most ambitious in its history, calling for a series of 15 linked interventions, including opening up the entire second floor of 13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields to reveal Soane’s private apartments, while expanding galleries and visitor facilities and enhancing overall collections care and building maintenance.

This challenge is in large part a response to a welcome turn of events: the museum’s increasing relevance and popularity. With attendance crossing 95,000 visitors a year, the Soane is in danger of literally being worn away. Tim Knox, Director of Sir John Soane’s Museum says, “The current initiative — the Opening up the Soane — is an ambitious £6.3 million appeal to improve facilities and displays, as well as for presentation and decoration. The New York lecture is sponsored by the Soane Foundation, New York, and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, and in San Francisco by the Soane Foundation and the San Francisco Fall Antiques Show.”

Sir John Soane’s Museum had hoped to raise approximately half of the campaign funds from the national Heritage Lottery Fund. Limited available funding in advance of the 2012 Olympics foreclosed this avenue of support, however, even for a grant request the HLF itself described as “faultless” and “of high quality.”

But the story does not end here, for only a day after news came from the Lottery Fund, the late Simon Sainsbury’s Monument Trust stepped in, directing $1,835,000 (US) to Opening Up the Soane, the largest single donation from an independent charitable trust in the museum’s history. Generous gifts from the J. Paul Getty Jr. Charitable Trust, The Leche Trust, and other foundations, as well as individuals, have followed.

“It has been incredibly heartening for us to see how, in a matter of weeks, supporters have rallied to donate almost a third of the funds needed to preserve this most British and idiosyncratic house museums,” says Knox.

On Monday, October 20, 6:30 p.m. in New York, and Thursday, October 23, 10:30 a.m. in San Francisco, Tim Knox, Director of Sir John Soane’s Museum, London, and the former Head Curator of the National Trust, will speak on a subject dear to the heart of John Soane: Buildings in Miniature: The Creation, Collecting and Display of Architectural Models in Europe.

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SOANE AT NO. 10 DOWNING STREET

by Chipra Ivana

This famous address, once the heart of government and the historic home of Prime Ministers, has an unassuming street doorway that belies the large, historic dwelling behind that overlooked St. James Park. Lord Liverpool was then Prime Minister, and enter 10 Downing Street and you will find the heart of British government, where Sir John Soane and London's most brilliant minds have worked through the ages.

The modest row of houses on Downing Street had been built by profiteering contractors and speculators. George Downing in 1682 is credited with building the houses. The Board of the Soane Foundation wishes to express its gratitude to the builders. The precise architectural vocabulary of the facade and the technology of the building are somewhat obscure; the 18th-century architect is still a mystery, but the elegance of the building is undeniable.

The so-called Soane's collection is a vision in the world of finance. Richard is also a visionary in the world of architecture, historic preservation and education. His philanthropic efforts are directed to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, the Juilliard School in New York, and the University of Pennsylvania. The Soane collection is located in the heart of London. I envy those of you who have yet to discover this extraordinary place for the first time.

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Soane Supporter’s Circle here in the United States. Become a Charter Member today!

Please visit our web site for more details and offerings. The Supporter's Circle starts at $100.

*Students and members of the academic community start at $50.

For more information...

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For details on Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation, including opportunities for support, please visit www.soane.org.

The Foundation is a registered 501c3 organization.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CHAS A. MILLER III

NEWSLETTER DESIGNS: ROBERT VAN NUTT

NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR: AMANDA DE BRACHT