

To reduce costs, the core teaching staff was limited to the three London-based tutors – myself, Dinah Eastop, and Dean Sully. The Deputy Director of the Soane Museum, Helen Dorey, was very generous with her time, leading a seminar and house tour, which provided insights into the decision-making process at the Soane. The museum conservator, Jane Bush, was a participant on the course, and she too helped us use the building and collection as the major case study. On the second day, we were joined by Alison Richmond (Chief Executive of ICON & Former Senior Tutor RCA/V&A Conservation Postgraduate Programme). Museum staff and salaried tutors did not claim expenses. The fee for the three-day course was GBP 325. Although a free place was offered to a conservation student (to be awarded by ballot), sadly no student applied as everyone assumed they would not win. The course began on 6 December with six participants, although we could have accommodated nine. The disappointing take-up of places was no doubt due to the wider economic crisis and the fact that many conservators were under threat of severe cutbacks and possible redundancies at that time.

The course followed the structure of the West Dean SCD-UK09 course, but, in light of previous feedback, the participants were provided with sheets detailing each day's activities. Again, care was taken to provide a range of tutors, teaching styles and activities outside the seminar room. Activities included: a tour of the museum and examination of its current GBP 7 million "Opening up the Soane" project; a buffet supper and viewing of "Toy Story II" on the first evening; a candle-lit evening visit to the museum on the second evening; and a trip to a historic local public house on the third. More time was provided for the participants to discuss their own mandates and missions. A slight change in emphasis from the first course was the encouragement given to participants to use any elements of the course to run their own course for staff and colleagues. To this end, they were promised digital copies of all the notes, handouts and PowerPoint presentations used during the course. The participants were invited to complete their own SWOT analysis of the course.

Strengths: Everyone commented favourably on the structure and delivery of the course. They felt that breadth and quality of the discussion was enhanced by the differing conservation specialisations of the delegates. The open discussions and the flexibility of the course to 'go off track' in response to specific issues raised by certain case studies was greatly appreciated. The privileged access to the Soane Museum and the generous contribution of the museum staff and Alison Richmond were recognized.

Opportunities: The participants felt the course offered a unique platform in the UK for open discussion and debate on relevant current views. It was suggested that the course should be available for