

Restored Soane saloon recognised with award



Top Coverage of the 2008 award in the HHA magazine. Above The underside of the repaired lantern. Left and below Sir John Soane's Saloon, painstakingly restored



Gore and Ball Photography; Hoxley Robert Architects; The Victorian Society; Getty

CHILLINGTON HALL, the south Staffordshire family home of the Giffard family for more than 800 years, has won the second Historic Houses Association (HHA)/Sotheby's Restoration Award for its painstaking work on Sir John Soane's Saloon. The £5,000 award, launched in 2008 and first won by Markenfield Hall, Yorkshire, was set up to recognise the huge efforts made by historic-house owners to maintain their properties for the good of the nation. John and Crescent Giffard, the 29th generation of the family to live at Chillington Hall, have implemented several essential repairs over the past 10 years, but the centrepiece has been the restoration of the

saloon, which includes a large central oval dome and elegant lantern (1786-89), work undertaken in consultation with The Sir John Soane's Museum, the Georgian Group and English Heritage. The lantern was in particularly urgent need of repair, as it was letting in water and posing a danger from dropping glass. The damaged timber, lead and glass have been repaired and a bespoke chandelier has been commissioned. The Saloon has also been redecorated in colours more appropriate to Soane's intentions, the cross-ventilation in the dome has been reinstated and the chimneypiece restored.

Edward Harley, a judge and president of the HHA, comments:

'The high quality of entries reflects the amount of conservation work being undertaken by HHA members, in spite of difficult times, and their commitment to their properties. The extensive work carried out by the Giffards breathes new life into the elegant rooms created by Sir John Soane.' There were some 35 entries to the competition and the runners-up were Westonbirt in Gloucestershire, Wilton Castle in Herefordshire and Boynton Hall in Yorkshire. Chillington Hall is open on Sundays in July and August (01902 850236; www.chillingtonhall.co.uk), and a food and country fair takes place at the hall this Sunday (July 19).

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