



BOOK AND LIBRARY CONSERVATOR WINS 2009 PLOWDEN MEDAL

Professor Nicholas Pickwoad has been awarded the Royal Warrant Holder Association's 2009 Plowden Medal. The award has been made in recognition of his unceasing dedication to the study and conservation of historic libraries and rare books. The medal will be presented to him by HRH The Princess Royal at the Royal Warrant Holders Association Lunch in London on 2nd June 2009.

Pickwoad is unusual in that he is both a practical conservator and an academic who has an innate ability to produce solutions for a wide range of problems. He invented the concept of the "bookshoe", nearly thirty years ago, designed to support and protect books on open shelves in architectural settings and, later, invented and marketed a portable board-creasing machine to facilitate on-site phase-boxing programmes. This is in addition to his work for the National Trust and the monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, where as leader of the library conservation project his extensive skills have been comprehensively utilised.

The gold medal, inaugurated in 1999, is awarded by the Royal Warrant Holders Association in memory of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE, the leading conservator who was Vice-President of the Association at the time of her death in 1997. The Medal is presented annually to the individual who has made the most significant recent contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession. It can also be awarded to recognise a lifetime of commitment and achievement.

This award recognises Pickwoad's craftsmanship, scholarship, innovation and work as a teacher in the field of book conservation. He has been a formative influence on book conservation and conservators for more than thirty years and has recently established the "Ligatus" project in conjunction with the University of the Arts to provide a research unit into the study of historic bookbinding through the development of digital tools and resources.

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Whilst studying at Oxford University, Pickwoad attended bookbinding evening classes at Oxford Polytechnic. Those early lessons led him to two years of formal training with Roger Powell OBE and set him on his chosen path.

Pickwoad's teaching career commenced in 1976 at the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts where he taught bookbinding one day a week, which later led to an annual seminar on the history and preservation of bindings. As his passion for the subject grew, he established a commercial rare book and manuscript conservation workshop in Norfolk and soon he was an advisor for the National Trust and NADFAS as well as working on the conservation of some of Britain's most revered libraries. During his career he has received many invitations to speak in the United States of America and has completed research fellowships in Italy and Germany. Under the British Council's auspices he surveyed the library of the National College of Arts, Lahore (founded by Rudyard Kipling's father) as part of their contribution to the 50th anniversary of the founding of Pakistan.

Richard Watling, Chairman of the Plowden Committee comments, "We are delighted to present the Royal Warrant Holders Association's 2009 Plowden Medal to Nicholas Pickwoad, his innovative work, born out of an in-depth knowledge of bookbinding combined with a scholar's understanding for the conservation of the book and historical library, has had a fundamental effect on current practice and will stand as a reference point for future generations of conservation professionals."

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Photographs will be taken of Prof. Nicholas Pickwoad receiving the Plowden Medal at the Royal Warrant Holders Luncheon on 2nd June 2009. Copies will be available from Shelley-Anne Claircourt at info@pressoffice.co.uk or 020.7854 1827.