



April 2002

LEADING CONSERVATION EXPERT AWARDED PLOWDEN MEDAL

Dr. David Leigh, who last year became Executive Director of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), the main professional body for conservators and restorers, has been awarded the 2002 Plowden Medal by The Royal Warrant Holders Association. The award has been made in recognition of his tireless efforts to raise standards in conservation, especially in the field of training. He was presented with the Medal by HM The Queen at The Royal Warrant Holders Annual Luncheon in London on 20 March.

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 awarded 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.

Dr Leigh (59) began his career as a conservator at the University of Southampton before taking up a lectureship at University College, Cardiff, where he pioneered the new B.Sc in Archaeological Conservation.

In 1987 he took on the major challenge of setting up and running the Conservation Unit for the Museums and Galleries Commission. Within a short time the Unit was recognised as an authoritative voice capable of delivering strategies to support excellence in conservation. Under Dr Leigh's leadership, the Unit became an active participant in the care of the nation's heritage, strongly promoting excellence in the provision of training, communication and information

exchange, raising awareness across both government and museum sectors and increasing the status of the professional conservator.

In 1993 Dr Leigh moved to the Museums Training Institute as Director, leading the way in persuading practitioners, across the whole conservation field, of the need to define standards. Two years later he became Principal of West Dean College, the adult residential college in Sussex offering full-time Diploma courses in conservation. Dr Leigh developed the College's training schemes, establishing more than 12 professional short courses, which brought together the hitherto separate strands of conservation – moveable objects and buildings – and also set restoration within the broader context of conservation. By linking the courses with a university, Dr Leigh also raised the academic standards for training future and established conservators.

Dr Leigh has been a member of numerous professional bodies and advisory committees, including the Council of the International Institute for Conservation, English Heritage Ancient Monuments and Science Committees, the Mary Rose Trust advisory committee, and is currently a Trustee of the Conference on the Training of Architects in Conservation (CoTAC).

He was directly responsible for setting up the Conservation Register and the annual Conservation Awards, has written papers and contributed to conferences on conservation, education and early Anglo-Saxon art and technology.

Comments Lord Marchwood, President of The Royal Warrant Holders Association, "We are delighted to make this award to Dr Leigh, who like Anna Plowden herself, has a remarkable record of developing and fostering conservation in all its aspects. In particular, his work has had a significant impact on raising public awareness of the need for conservation."

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Note to Editors:

Anna Plowden was a founding partner of Plowden & Smith Ltd, one of the world's largest commercial conservation enterprises. Granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment to HM The Queen in 1982 and to HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother ten years later, Anna was elected to the Council of the Royal Warrant Holders Association in 1990.

