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LEADING CONSERVATOR WINS 2005 PLOWDEN MEDAL

Carole Milner, who played a pivotal role in helping create the new Institute of Conservation, has been awarded the Royal Warrant Holders Association 2005 Plowden Medal. The award has been made in recognition of her exceptional contribution to the development of the conservation profession. She will be presented with the Medal by HRH The Duke of Gloucester at the Royal Warrant Holders Association lunch in London on 7 June.

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.

Carole Milner's visionary leadership has taken the entire conservation profession to the point where it is poised to be represented by a single unified professional body – the Institute of Conservation. Historically the bodies representing the UK conservation profession have been fragmented. In 2002 Carole Milner was invited to chair the National Council for Conservation and Restoration (NCCR) with the aim of exploring the feasibility of creating a single unified professional body. After two demanding years of complex discussions the historic decision was made by the five groups to join together as a single unified organisation – described as "one of the defining moments in UK cultural heritage conservation history."

Carole's leadership of the NCCR during convergence discussions was regarded as visionary. She was passionate about creating an Institute which could provide younger incoming members of the profession with an authoritative and representative organisation – a single voice able to speak on the entire profession's behalf on professional matters in the wider heritage sector. The Plowden Medal recognises Carole's selfless dedication, enthusiasm, inspiring leadership, energy and personal time invested in creating the new Institute of Conservation. Her contribution was made entirely in her own time while holding down a demanding full-time job at Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

Earlier in her career Carole worked for several years in Italy and France as a paintings conservator, working from 1986-1994 at the Louvre. She played a key role in creating the French Federation, then the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (ECCO) in 1991. In 1994 she was appointed Head of Conservation and Collection Care at the then Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) in London. She left the MGC in 1999 to become Head of Returned Volunteer Programmes at VSO.

John Horrell, President of the Royal Warrant Holders Association comments, "Throughout her career Carole Milner has been a champion and advocate for the conservation profession – just as Anna Plowden was. It is particularly fitting that she should receive the Plowden Medal this year when her tireless work in bringing the convergence process to fruition has been achieved."

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