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CONSERVATION SCIENTIST WINS 2007 PLOWDEN MEDAL

Dr Vincent Daniels has been awarded the Royal Warrant Holders Association's 2007 Plowden Medal. The award is made in recognition of his long and exceptional contribution to the development of understanding in conservation, the excellence of his dedicated research and his ready engagement with practitioners of the conservation profession. He will be presented with the Medal by The Lord Chamberlain, the Earl Peel, at the Royal Warrant Holders Association lunch in London on 5 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 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.

During Vincent Daniels' 33-year career in conservation science he has generated an outstanding body of research work which impacts on most conservation fields. His knowledge of materials and their behaviour, based on his own research and his familiarity with others, is encyclopaedic. His work is cited throughout conservation literature as a reference for research methodology and for the insight it provides on specific conservation issues. His publications cover a wide range of conservation topics from materials testing to bark cloth, pigments to textiles, and will be of lasting importance to

the profession. He has more papers in the prestigious journal 'Studies in Conservation' than any other UK conservation scientist. In addition to formal publications Dr Daniels' research is widely referred to on the internet and in relation to the world's iconic objects, such as the Rosetta Stone to the Turin Shroud. As a measure of his international standing, he was one of just eleven UK conservators selected by the American Institute of Conservation to be recorded for their oral history project. He has adjudicated in legal problems associated with conservation of works of art and regularly attends international meetings.

His innovative research has focused on real problems encountered by conservators and has often been in collaboration with conservators from a variety of institutions. The results have helped develop both preventive regimes and interventive treatments. In the late seventies he introduced plasma reactions to conservation and in the eighties his rediscovery and application of the Russell effect (an image produced on photographic plates by oxidising material) offered new approaches in the study of materials behaviour. In the nineties he covered a huge range of materials and processes including the influence of metals on paper. His work on washing paper highlights the significance of different treatments and the influence of sizing on the process. His work on pigments and dyes covers a wide range of artefacts including textiles, ethnographic objects, paintings and works on paper.

Vincent Daniels' understanding of materials and his ability to explain complex 'science' to a wide audience has had a profound influence on the profession. He presents regularly at national and international conferences and has communicated with scientists outside the field, encouraging them to engage with conservation questions. He lectures to university chemistry societies and organised an exhibition on Chemistry and Conservation for the Royal Society of Chemistry at Burlington House, which was subsequently exhibited at several UK locations.

Much of his work was undertaken as a member of the British Museum's staff but following early retirement in 2003 Dr Daniels became a Research Fellow in RCA/V&A Conservation where in addition to his research he continues to contribute to the development of new conservators. He has been an external lecturer and examiner at Camberwell College of the Arts for several years and an examiner at the RCA and Manchester University. He is supportive of students undertaking research projects and a source of advice and teaching for students with little or no scientific background.

Dr Daniels has always tried to gain practical experience of the fields in which he works and was for three years an evening class student of bookbinding. He is also a painter, stained glass artist and holder of a City & Guilds certificate in precious jewellery making. He is currently involved in designing a dye plant garden for the Borough of Waltham Forest's Museum.

John Shepherd, President of the Royal Warrant Holders Association comments, "Vincent Daniels is undoubtedly a great asset to the conservation profession. He richly deserves to be awarded the Plowden Medal as a fitting recognition of more than 30 year service to conservation science.

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