



# THE PLOWDEN MEDAL

## (Notes to the Nomination Form)

1. The Plowden Medal established and endowed by the Royal Warrant Holders Association, in memory of The Hon Anna Plowden CBE (Short biography is at Annex A). It is awarded annually to an individual who has recently made an outstanding contribution to the conservation profession.

### Eligibility

2. Reasons for nomination might include any project or other endeavour within the conservation of our cultural heritage, which has brought credit to the profession and/or the nominated candidate. An illustrative list of their achievement, projects or endeavours are of essential interest to the selection board.
3. An exceptional level of commitment and achievement within the conservation profession is recognised by this award.
4. The award is unlikely to be given to anybody who is not already well established in the profession.
5. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the potential to make a positive impact on cultural heritage conservation in future years.
6. Candidates must be a permanent resident in the United Kingdom.
7. Candidates may be nominated by anyone, but the Nomination Form should include supporting statements from no more than two qualified and, ideally, practicing conservators. Wherever possible submissions and supporting letters must be typed.

### Nomination and Selection Procedure

8. Nominations can be made throughout the year and full details and nomination terms are available on the [RWHA website](#). Forms must be completed online by **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024**. For any queries, please contact Claire Anderson at [plowdenmedal@rwha.co.uk](mailto:plowdenmedal@rwha.co.uk). The award will be presented at a Royal Warrant Holders Association Event in the Autumn.
9. The Medal will not necessarily be awarded every year – only when there is a clearly deserving case.
10. Nominations, which should be made in confidence, will be acknowledged but no other correspondence will be entered into. The name of the recipient, however, will be announced in the press.

11. The making of this award on behalf of the Royal Warrant Holders Association is personal to the recipient. It is not intended to represent any express or implied endorsement in respect of any organisations, companies or other bodies with which the recipient is affiliated, nor does it give the recipient the authority to seek to represent in any way the views, or speak or write on behalf, of the Royal Warrant Holders Association.
12. The panel of judges includes senior members of the conservation profession, practising conservators, and representatives from the following organisations:
  - Hogan Lovells International LLP
  - Julia Nagle Conservation Ltd
  - Oliver Caroe Architecture
  - Plowden & Smith Ltd
  - QEST Scholar: Stained Glass and Glass Conservation
  - Royal Collection Trust
  - Royal Warrant Holders: Farrows Ltd & PB Ceramic Conservation Ltd
  - The National Archives
  - The Royal Warrant Holders Association
  - UCL Institute of Sustainable Heritage

## **ANNEX A**

### **THE HON ANNA PLOWDEN CBE**

Anna graduated from the Institute of Archaeology in 1963 and was then awarded a fellowship by the British School of Archaeology in Baghdad where she worked on the conservation of ivories discovered at Nimrud.

In 1966 she started her conservation company which was the first to bring modern scientific methods into the commercial sector. She specialised in the cleaning of excavated bronze statues using an ethical painstaking method carried out under a microscope, rather than the then popular method of chemical stripping. She felt strongly that scientific knowledge should be balanced with practical skills and an aesthetic awareness.

By 1969 she had established close links with another commercial conservator, Peter Smith. This allowed her to expand her range from archaeological and fine art objects to include metal, stonework and organic materials. The two companies formally combined in 1985 as Plowden & Smith Ltd. Anna's focus was always the conservation of antique, fine and applied art objects and decorative ornament, rather than constructional or building fabric conservation. This distinction is sometimes described as the conservation of movable objects rather than immovable structures.

Alongside the work carried out in the workshop on smaller, individual objects, Anna encouraged the Company to carry out a range of larger projects that have included;

- The cleaning and decontamination of the earliest 27,500 Acts of Parliament.
- The production and installation of mounts and fittings to display the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London.
- The research and establishment of a new method of conserving ancient, waterlogged lacquer objects.
- Disaster recovery of items from fire and flood including work at Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle.

Some of the appointments held during her career include, Trustee of the Victoria & Albert Museum, Trustee of the Edward James Foundation (responsible for West Dean College), Chairman of the Conservation Committee of the Crafts Council, Member of the Museums and Galleries Commission Conservation Advisory Committee, Member of the Council of the Textile Conservation Centre.

She played an active and passionate part in the development of the conservation profession and campaigned for accreditation, proper training for conservators, the use of trained conservators on public projects, and fair competitive tendering practices.

Plowden & Smith Ltd held Royal Warrants of Appointment to HM The Queen and to HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother as Restorers of Fine Art Objects. Anna was a member of the Council of the Royal Warrant Holders Association and a founding Trustee of the Association's charity The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust.

She was appointed CBE in 1997 for her services to conservation.