Plowden Medal Winner 2021
Professor Jane Henderson FIIC

Professor Jane Henderson FIIC receiving her medal at the RWHA President’s Reception at St James’s Palace.

(Left to right, RWHA President, Pamela Harper, Plowden Medal Winner 2021, Professor Jane Henderson and Plowden Medal Chairman, Nick Farrow)

CITATION FOR PROFESSOR JANE HENDERSON

For her outstanding leadership and development of new generations of conservation professionals, her essential role in the development of the profession and her continuing commitment to bringing leading research and innovations into conservation practice in the UK and internationally.
Within the academic, conservation and wider heritage conservation profession, Jane Henderson is recognised as a leading educator and thinker and is well known as a champion of conservation practice. She is never afraid to challenge the status quo, developing conservation professionals who bring not only expertise to bear but the ability to adapt and develop in diverse and challenging environments, from the 2007 credit crunch to the Antarctic Survey and finding a professional route through the pandemic.

Jane’s work has led to the graduation of 100s of archaeology, conservation and collection care professionals, developed capability and capacity in conservation internationally and brought innovative and effective approaches in influence directly into conservation practice. She has contributed to the development of the profession through her contributions to the Institute of Conservation, International Institute for Conservation, British Standards Institute, Collections Trust and many more. She has been a valued advisor and advocate for conservation and collections in Wales working locally to secure provision and nationally with the Welsh Government leading to new approaches to national collections.

As an academic embedded in practice, Jane has consistently brought research-led innovation to conservation theory and practice. Throughout her career she has challenged traditional structures of conservation decision making, supported sustainability practice and worked with conservation professionals on communication and influence in conservation practice. Her work “Beyond lifetimes: who do we exclude when we keep things for the future?” has challenged the conservation and heritage profession to reassess the approach to conservation decision making, stimulating substantial discussion within the sector on the role and weight of life experience alongside the life expectancy in the preservation of historic materials and settings.

Jane’s work continues to support the profession to be effective and innovative during times of challenges and opportunity and she is regularly sought out to deliver influencing advice and training in conservation and heritage settings both locally and internationally. Her work on communication and its role in conservation practice has made significant contributions to new tools to support practice, including the pest occurrence index that has been adopted by Conserv as the basis for their integrated pest management software.

As a Professor at Cardiff University, the Secretary General of the Institute for Conservation and an active member of the conservation profession Jane is generous with her knowledge, expertise and networks. Her commitment to and success in the profession can be seen not only in her boundary-pushing research, her visibility in the community and generations of conservation professionals but also in the role she continues to play in the practice and careers of conservators and heritage professionals nationally and internationally.