

# MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGISTS NEWS 71



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Obituary: Pieta Greaves (SMA member and conservator) – died unexpectedly in April 2025

By Jenni Butterworth

Pieta grew up on a farm in New Zealand, and moved to the UK after finishing her degree in Anthropology. She trained as a conservator first at Cardiff University in object conservation, and then at Edinburgh University in architectural conservation. She then took a job at AOC Archaeology, becoming Senior Conservator, where she also met her partner, Jake.

In 2013, she moved to the Midlands, becoming the Conservation Coordinator for the Staffordshire Hoard at Birmingham Museums Trust. Under her leadership, the Staffordshire Hoard conservation programme won two awards, the Pilgrim Trust Award for Conservation (2015) and the American Institute of Archaeology Conservation Management Award (2014).



Pieta Greaves (SMA member and conservator).

Pieta set up Drakon Heritage and Conservation in 2016 with myself and later Lizzie Miller, all of whom met working on the Staffordshire Hoard. With Drakon, she undertook a wide range of projects, from archaeological conservation and x-ray for development-led projects, to collections care, accreditation preparation and object conservation projects for museums and other organisations, many of whom are SMA or AIM members. Her work was shortlisted in 2023 for the Museums + Heritage awards: Restoration or Conservation Project of the Year.

Objects and conservation were her driving passion, and her love for them was infectious. She was good humoured and entertaining as well as professional, and I know from the many kind messages of condolence I've received that her determination to find solutions for organisations whatever their resources, while supporting best practice, was greatly valued. Above all, she was generous with her expertise and experience, often thinking of ways to include volunteer and staff training in her projects, or providing free advice. She herself volunteered her skills to a number of organisations and projects she cared about.

The breadth and depth of Pieta's conservation expertise was impressive, and she was a long-standing member of the Institute of Conservation's Accreditation Committee. Her commitment to broadening the reach of conservation was very significant, whether that was providing practical experience for young conservators, or training

courses to colleagues and volunteers, or engaging the public with conservation, archaeology and museums through social media, events and other activities. The loss of her expertise is a huge blow to a small sector, but her conviction that the stories that archaeology and conservation generate belong to everyone, and should be shared as widely as possible, is her great legacy, and she will be sorely missed.

Pieta Greaves, conservator, 1979-2025. She leaves partner Jake and a number of treasured cats.



---

Spring-Summer 2025