

NATIONAL EQUINE FORUM

8 December 2016

Three awe-inspiring people shortlisted for equestrian award

Three remarkable individuals have been shortlisted for the prestigious National Equine Forum (NEF) Sir Colin Spedding Award 2017. The award is presented annually to an outstanding and as yet unrecognised individual or organisation that has made an important contribution to the equestrian world. The three nominees for the 2017 award are fire and rescue expert Jim Green, side-saddle authority Maureen James and equine veterinary nurse Bonny Millar. The winner will be announced at the National Equine Forum on Thursday 2nd March 2017.

Sir Colin Spedding was the founding chairman of the NEF and chaired the event for 20 years until shortly before his death in 2012. He ensured that representatives of all areas of the equine sphere were made welcome to the Forum, and that topics of general interest and concern could be discussed openly and without rancour. His aim was to allow the equine world to consider and then speak with a coordinated voice on matters of the moment. The award was introduced in 2013, in his memory.

Jim Green grew up in the New Forest and trained as a Forest Manager before joining Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in 1996. Since 2004 Jim has been at the forefront of response to animal rescues in Hampshire and led the implementation of animal rescue methodology, training and equipment that is now standard throughout the UK Fire and Rescue Service. The improvement of animal rescue skills was driven from the ground up by two likeminded operational firefighters. Jim continued to research and develop ideas in his own time alongside his day job until he was in a position to offer solutions to senior managers.

He has been keynote speaker at conferences in the UK, USA, Turkey and Australia, and was rescue advisor to the Veterinary Services Team at the London 2012 Olympic Games. He is co-founder of the British Animal Rescue and Trauma Care Association (BARTA), which he continues to manage in a voluntary capacity. Currently Jim is in the United States for 12 months, developing animal rescue and disaster response capabilities, working for the Centre for Equine Health at the University of California.

Jim said in response to this nomination: "It is a real honour to be nominated for the Sir Colin Spedding Award 2017. Little did I know when joining the fire service that my path would lead me in this direction. I am excited for the future as together we can develop these pioneering activities to promote safer rescues, improve welfare and protect livelihoods."

Maureen James had her first pony at the age of 18 months and rode on a basket saddle. She was a member of the Perth Pony Club from an early age, has hunted with the Fife, with the Linlithgow and Stirlingshire when in Edinburgh and with the Atherstone and the Pytchley when in Warwickshire. She evented at novice level, qualified for the Foxhunter Final in show jumping and showed ponies astride and ladies' hunters side saddle.

When competing in Ladies Show Hunter classes in the late 50s/early 60s very few ladies rode side saddle. When the Side Saddle Association (then the Ladies Side Saddle Association) was founded in 1974 Maureen was quick to join and has been involved ever since. She has held most of the posts within the Association over the forty years plus of its existence, including Area Representative, Show Affiliations Officer, Show Director, SSA Secretary, SSA Chairman and Vice President. She has been President of the Association for the past ten years.

Maureen said: "To say that I was astonished to hear that I had been nominated for the Sir Colin Spedding Award 2017 is an understatement. When I had sight of the names of previous nominees, I felt very humbled to be among such distinguished company."

Bonny Millar grew up around cows rather than horses in her home state of Pennsylvania but always had an interest in the latter. It was as an equine medicine nurse at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center that she met her dream horse, a thoroughbred working hunter who was donated to the Center, and learnt the finer points of riding and competing. In 1991 she married and moved to the UK, joining Rosssdales Veterinary Surgeons as Head Nurse. During her twelve years in the role she helped develop the first qualification for equine veterinary nurses in the UK, gained her own UK qualifications and advised on the design of their new hospital.

Bonny continues to mentor nursing and veterinary students at Rosssdales, whilst developing her own interests in critical care nursing, wound management and neonatology. She is published and lectures internationally. She is a past President of the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA), equine nursing editor of the VNJ, an Advisor to the BVNA and volunteered on the veterinary team for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Bonny is responsible for creating the content and sourcing lecturers for the equine stream at BVNA congress every year and for the association's CPD days. She is also producing a reference book on equine wound management for equine nurses and veterinary technicians.

Bonny said: "Equine nursing is a young profession, and I am grateful that I'm in a position to encourage and teach those starting out. We should leave legacies, I believe in the proverb – 'A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in'. As VNs we do much of our best work behind the scenes and out of sight – when I received the news of my nomination, I was exhausted, after a long weekend on duty. The call really lifted my spirits."

The Sir Colin Spedding Award committee will select the winner from the shortlisted candidates, to be announced at the 25th National Equine Forum on Thursday 2nd March 2017.

Previous recipients of the award are: Sue Martin BHSII who runs Trent Park Equestrian Centre (2016), Paul Greeves former Executive Director and Keeper of the General Stud Book at Weatherbys (2015), Dr Andrew Waller on behalf of the Animal Health Trust (AHT) Infectious Disease Group (2014) and Martin Clunes on behalf of UK Equine Welfare Charities (2013).

The special 25 years celebratory programme for the 2017 National Equine Forum will

be announced shortly. Tickets are available to equestrian trade delegates and equestrian professionals at a cost of £100 per person, which includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day. To apply or to find out how you could enjoy the privilege of becoming a Friend of the Forum please contact the Hon Secretary, Mary Martin at mary.martin@nationalequineforum.com.

For further information on the NEF visit <http://www.nationalequineforum.com>

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Note to editors

The National Equine Forum is an annual event bringing together representatives from all echelons of the equestrian industry, including government, equestrian sport, veterinary science and welfare. It has been running for 25 years and is organised by a committee of appointed volunteers, reflecting various sectors of the equestrian industry.

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