



ABOVE: the outgoing Society president, Michael Palin, with this year's RGS-IBG medal and award winners, including Professor Charles Withers (sixth from left), Alastair Fothergill (tenth from left), Paul Cornish (second from right), Lydia Williams, (second from left), Stuart Lane (ninth from left) and Andy Rouse (first on right)

described as a visionary subject leader with a passion for getting his students to experience geography. He has written a wide range of teaching resources and has independently organised and led expeditions - this summer taking 34 pupils to Madagascar on a project that will help to build a school.

Lydia was recognised as a driving force for the improvement of teaching and learning practices. Passionate about fieldwork and experiences outside the classroom, she has greatly enriched the provision of opportunities for students at all levels - developing a series of activities that range from a travel club to visits to the Olympic site.

Other recipients included Professor Stuart Lane from the University of Lausanne, who was honoured with the Victoria Medal for his research in physical geography, while popular wildlife and nature photographer Andy Rouse received the Cherry Kearton Medal and Award.

'Our medal and award recipients illustrate the breadth of geography and its importance in understanding our world's changing societies, environments and economies,' said Dr Rita Gardner, the Society's director.

■ For a full list of medals and awards winners, visit www.rgs.org/medals



RIGHT: the Society's new president, Professor Judith Rees

MEET THE NEW PRESIDENT

The Society's annual general meeting also saw the election of its first woman president, Professor Judith Rees CBE, who was elected unopposed to the position for its three-year term.

A distinguished academic geographer, Professor Rees is currently director of the London School of Economics. She also acts as director of both its ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy (hosted jointly with the University of Leeds) and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment.

Professor Rees said that she was honoured to be chosen as the Society's new president. 'To be asked to take over the presidency of such an internationally acclaimed and respected body is an enormous honour and I am only too aware of the distinguished figures whose boots I will have to try to fill,' she said.

Professor Rees has been involved in advising international organisations, government departments and NGOs - including the World Bank, UNDP and the EC/Rio Group, CPRE and Friends of the Earth - on a range of water- and environment-related topics. She was a member of the technical committee of the Global Water Partnership for some 13 years and is currently a member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation.

'We're delighted that Judith will be the Society's first ever female president and we're looking forward to her working with everyone to lead the Society into its next stage of development,' said Dr Rita Gardner, director of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

Michael Palin will remain in the official role of immediate past president and, as such, will continue to be involved with the Society and its work.

Excellence recognised

From scientific fieldwork and historical geography to excellence in teaching and photography, the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)'s annual medals and awards recognise and celebrate outstanding contributions across the breadth of geography.

The Society's two gold medals, which are approved by its patron, Her Majesty the Queen, are among the world's highest honours for the development and promotion of geography. Awarded since 1832, the medals' past winners include Sir Edmund Hillary and Sir David Attenborough.

This year's award presentations were made by outgoing Society president Michael Palin on the day of the Society's annual general meeting. The royal medals were awarded to Professor Charles Withers, professor of historical geography at the University of Edinburgh, who received the Founder's Medal for the encouragement and development of historical and cultural geography; and award-winning BBC

executive producer Alastair Fothergill, who accepted the Patron's Medal for his extensive work promoting globally the understanding of the world's environments.

As a member of the BBC's Natural History Unit since the early 1980s, Alastair has worked in every habitat on Earth, often in extreme and remote locations using innovative filming techniques, advanced technology and cutting-edge scientific research to capture and portray the beauty and complexity of the world's environments and creatures. Most recently, Alastair has worked on three major acclaimed series - *The Blue Planet*, *The Frozen Planet* and *Planet Earth* - the last of which has been viewed by more than 500 million people in more than 180 countries.

Receiving the Ordnance Survey Awards for excellence in teaching geography at secondary level were Paul Cornish, head of geography at Coopers Company and Coburn School, Upminster, Essex, and Lydia Williams, head of geography at the Jewish Free School in Kingsbury, London. Paul was

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) promotes enjoyment and understanding of our world. Membership is open to all. You may use geography in your profession, have a thirst for geographical knowledge or a passion for travel. Geographical is the Society's magazine and is available as part of membership. To find out more, call the Membership Office on 020 7591 3080



The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is a leading world centre for geographers and geographical learning. One of our aims is to stimulate the awareness and enjoyment of the subject to a diverse range of people.

Geography is about the understanding of the people, places and environments of our world, the processes by which they are changing, and the interconnections between them - both locally and globally.

The Society carries out a wide range of activities to support its aims. We support research groups; promote geography within the national curriculum; produce scholarly publications; provide training in scientific field techniques and expeditions; offer information through our large map collection, library and picture library; and engage the wider public through our popular national lecture series.

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