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Media release

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**Royal
Geographical
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning

● Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) honours top geographers

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2017 medals and awards presented

Professor Sir Gordon Conway and Lindsey Hilsum were presented with the Society's two Royal Medals at an awards ceremony yesterday evening. These are part of a series of awards that recognise extraordinary achievement in geographical research, fieldwork and teaching, photography and public engagement.

The Royal Medals, which are of equal standing, have been approved by Her Majesty the Queen, and are among the highest honours of their kind in the world. They have been presented since the 1830s and past recipients include Sir David Attenborough, Professor Diana Liverman and Lord Stern.

Professor Sir Gordon Conway KCMG FRS, a former President of the Society, was awarded this year's Founder's Medal for the enhancement and promotion of agricultural development in Asia and Africa.

Broadcaster, writer and geographer Nicholas Crane, President of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), said: "Professor Sir Gordon Conway is a world leader in international development and one of the world's foremost experts on food security and the sustainable development of agricultural land. For over 50 years, Sir Gordon has worked to improve the lives of millions through his pioneering research, leadership of major organisations, and advice to government on sustainable development."

Professor Sir Gordon Conway said: "I am greatly honoured by this award. Although by training and experience I am an agricultural ecologist, I am an applied geographer at heart. My mother was a geography school teacher, so the subject is my genes."

Lindsey Hilsum, International Editor for Channel 4 News, received this year's Patron's Medal for promoting the understanding of global conflict and inequality.

Nicholas Crane said: "Lindsey Hilsum has been reporting for three decades from conflict ridden countries across the world, including Syria, Iraq and Rwanda. Her accessible and engaging journalism raises awareness of geopolitical issues and showcases the value of in-depth knowledge of geographical contexts, which has never been more important."

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Lindsey Hilsum said: “I have spent my life travelling to report conflict and deprivation across the world, but I never thought that I would be honoured by the learned society associated with the great explorers of history. It is quite overwhelming to receive this medal.”

This year the Society’s medals and awards recognised 17 different people for their outstanding contributions to geography. Among other recipients, Harry Hook was awarded the Cherry Kearton Medal and Award for original documentation of Africa through photography.

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Notes to editors:

1. For further media enquiries, including image requests, please contact the Society’s Head of Public Engagement and Communications, on 020 7519 3008 or c.watson@rgs.org.
2. The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) is the learned society and professional body for geography. Formed in 1830 for 'the advancement of geographical science', today we deliver this objective through developing, supporting and promoting geographical research, expeditions and fieldwork, education, public engagement, and geography input to policy. We aim to foster an understanding and informed enjoyment of our world. We hold the world's largest private geographical collection and provide public access to it. We have a thriving Fellowship and membership and offer the professional accreditation 'Chartered Geographer' www.rgs.org
3. The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)’s prestigious medals and awards recognise excellence in geographical research and fieldwork, teaching and public engagement. They are presented annually to individuals who have made outstanding achievements. Recipients join a prestigious list that includes Sir Alexander Burnes, David Livingstone, Alfred Russel Wallace, Captain R. Scott and more recently Professor Peter Haggett, Dr Sylvia Earle, Professor Diana Liverman, Sir Crispin Tickell and Sir David Attenborough www.rgs.org/medals.
4. Her Majesty the Queen approves the award of the Gold Medals – the Founder’s Medal and the Patron’s Medal – each year, both of which originated in 1831 as an annual gift of fifty guineas to the Society from King William IV. In 1839, it was agreed this sum should be converted into the two gold medals.
5. **The awards were presented at the Society’s headquarters on Monday 5 June 2017** as part of the Society’s Annual General Meeting in London. Photos of the recipients are available from the RGS-IBG press office. The full list of medals and awards winners is as follows:

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN has approved the award of the ROYAL MEDALS as follows:

Royal Medal - Founder’s Medal

Sir Gordon Conway KCMG FRS

For the enhancement and promotion of agricultural development in Asia and Africa

Royal Medal - Patron’s Medal

Lindsey Hilsum

For promoting the understanding of global conflict and inequality

THE SOCIETY’S COUNCIL has made the following awards:

Victoria Medal

Professor Andrew Cliff

For research excellence in spatial epidemiology



Busk Medal	Professor David J A Evans <i>For excellence and originality in the study of glacial landscapes and processes and empowering the next generation</i>
Cherry Kearton Medal and Award	Harry Hook <i>For original documentation of Africa through photography</i>
Murchison Award	Professor Henry Wai-chung Yeung <i>For pioneering publications in the field of globalisation</i>
Back Award	Professor Harriet Bulkeley <i>For contributions to the shaping of international policy on climate change</i>
Cuthbert Peek Award	Dr James Cheshire <i>For advancing geographical knowledge through the use of mappable Big Data</i>
Gill Memorial Awards	Dr Sarah Mills <i>For outstanding early career research in cultural geography</i>
Ordnance Survey Awards (two awards)	Claire Power Paul Turner <i>For excellence in geography education at the secondary level</i>
Taylor & Francis Award	Ian Cook <i>For excellence in the promotion and practice of teaching and learning of geography in higher education</i>
Ness Award	Professor Kathleen Jamie <i>For outstanding creative writing at the confluence of travel, nature and culture</i>
Alfred Steers Dissertation Prize	Alex Henry <i>For the undergraduate geography dissertation judged to be the best in 2016</i>
Area Prize	Dr Brendon Blue <i>For the best article in the journal by a new researcher</i>
Geographical Award	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award <i>For inspiring generations of young people through challenging expeditions</i>
Honorary Fellowship	David Riviere <i>In recognition of extraordinary commitment and service to the Society</i>