

# Bravest of the brave

Tina Orr-Munro reports on the five Metropolitan police officers whose extraordinary courage was recognised with the overall Police Bravery Award for 2010



When four undercover Metropolitan police officers responded to reports of two youngsters stealing a moped, none of them could have anticipated they would find themselves coming under sustained fire.

The officers – PC James Berry, PC Jonathan Lowe, PC Stuart Higgs, and PC Dion Bird – were working undercover in Hammersmith, West London, in August 2008 when they responded to reports of two boys trying to steal a moped.

When they arrived at the scene, and identified themselves as police, the boys ran off. PCs Higgs and Bird chased one of the culprits, while PC Lowe ran after the other. PC Berry stayed in the vehicle which he used to try and cut off their escape.

As the officers gave chase, one of the hooded youths turned and levelled a pistol at PCs Higgs and Bird, firing three shots at them. PC Lowe heard the shots, but continued to chase the other suspect, even though he had no idea if the suspect, like his friend, was armed.

The first thug then fired more shots at his pursuers and the officers dived behind a car to avoid being hit. A female passerby froze with fear at what was happening and PC Higgs broke his cover to rescue the woman, as the shots continued.

The offender ran off, still pursued by PC Bird and PC Berry shouting at him to give himself up.

They were then joined by PC Adrian Pine. As the yob aimed the gun directly at him, he struck the boy's arm with his baton, forcing him to drop his weapon.

PC Higgs later said: "We were amazed to find he was just 13 or 14, but you couldn't tell that at night.

"The gun had been firing blanks, but we didn't know that. And nor did the lad. Whoever had given him the gun had told him if he ever had any trouble with police to shoot. The flashes and bangs were real enough."

The five officers were named as this year's winners of the 2010 Police Bravery Award, for their outstanding courage. Paul McKeever, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales paid tribute to all the officers at this year's ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel.

He said: "Each of these officers is a truly deserving winner. I am extremely proud of their dedication to protecting us from harm and threat."

Home Secretary Theresa May called the officers 'the bravest of the brave'.

## The 2010 Police Bravery Regional Award winners

PC Elizabeth Window from South Wales won the Welsh region. She saved a woman from certain death by holding on to her when she jumped from a bridge in Cardiff. PC Window struggled but managed to drag her to safety.

Bedfordshire PC's Jenny Liddell and Gary Walker won the South East region. The officers risked their own lives to save the passengers of a car engulfed in flames.

The winner for the North West was given posthumously to PC Bill Barker from Cumbria who courageously saved the lives of members of the public from a collapsing bridge during devastating floods last year, tragically losing his own life in his gallant efforts to save others.

The winners for London, and the overall winner, were the five officers from the Met (see left) who scooped the award for their incredible bravery tackling armed and violent offenders.

The winner of the Eastern regional award was single-patrolling student officer PC Paula Rutherford who tackled an armed and dangerous man, all the while keeping the public safe and the control room notified.

North Yorkshire officer, PC Sarah Lacy won the North East region. Despite suffering with asthma and being off-duty the officer entered a smoke-filled building near her home and rescued the residents inside without fear for her own health or safety.

The West Midlands winners were PC Linda Tooth and PC Hayley Court. The officers took on a crazed knife man who attacked his former partner in front of her children. The officers, without fear for their own safety, tackled the man saving the woman's life.

The South West winner was PC Tom Kinderman. The Wiltshire officer saved a trapped and unconscious woman from drowning after her car crashed into a river. He pulled the woman through the back window of her car as the front end was submerged in water.



Photography: Anderson Photography

Pictured with TV presenter Gabby Logan, and police officer and Premier League referee Alan Wiley (back, right), are Met PCs (back, left to right) Jonathan Lowe, Adrian Pine, (front, left to right) James Berry, Dion Bird and Stuart Higgs.