

# Real heroes – the Police Bravery Awards

The Police Federation's Police Bravery Awards, held in association with The Sun newspaper, recognise the work of police officers who carry out courageous acts every day. Tina Orr Munro highlights the stories behind some of the nominees in the first of a series of articles leading up to the award ceremony, to be held at The Dorchester Hotel in London's Park Lane on July 10.



LOCAL HERO: Gwent PC Keith Seagrim (centre) with Cilla Davies, Chair of the Police Authority, and Gwent Chief Constable Mike Tonge

Acts of bravery don't always occur when an officer is on duty. In the case of PC Keith Seagrim, he was woken in the middle of the night by a woman's screams and then went on to endure two hours in freezing cold waters as he battled to save a trapped pensioner from drowning.

The Gwent officer and his Crime Scene Manager wife, Gail, heard a woman's cries late one night in August 2007.

They immediately got up and followed the sound of her screams in an attempt to locate the woman who was clearly in extreme distress. Making their way through thick woodland in complete darkness they spotted Kay Bellew, who was submerged up to her

shoulders in a river at the bottom of a ten-foot high bank.

As the river was in full flow and threatened to sweep her away at any moment, the 50-year-old constable forced his way through the thick undergrowth and jumped straight into the freezing waters.

The woman's leg was trapped by a heavy branch well below the surface of the water. By this stage, she had slipped into severe shock and was drifting in and out of consciousness. Refusing to give up and, despite being almost completely submerged in water, PC Seagrim acted as a buffer to support Mrs Bellew while trying to reassure her and keep her awake.

Gail Seagrim then called the

emergency services and, when they arrived, guided them to the scene.

Although fire crews managed to secure the officer and the woman with a rope, they could not get down the bank because of its steepness. The only hope was to pass a saw down to PC Seagrim for him to cut through the branch. The officer then spent another hour in the icy waters with the 60-year-old grandmother until he finally managed to free her leg.

**“At the time we both just went into police mode – it was only afterwards that we realised it could have been a fatal situation. If we hadn’t heard her I don’t know if she would have made it through the night.”**

PC Keith Seagrim

The pair then climbed to safety on a ladder that had been lowered by the fire crew. Mrs Bellew, who had been out walking her dog when she slipped down the muddy bank, was taken to the Royal Gwent Hospital and treated for hypothermia but has since made a full recovery.

She later said: “I’m only here because of them. PC Seagrim didn’t know what he was jumping into. He just threw himself into the water. It was so brave.”

PC Seagrim said: “At the time we both just went into police mode – it was only afterwards that we realised it could have been a fatal situation.

“If we hadn’t heard her I don’t know if she would have made it through the night. She was certainly lucky because that river had been five or six feet deep a few days previously.”

PC Seagrim and his wife were both awarded the chief constable’s commendation for their bravery.



### Nominees from the first three regions

#### Region 1 (North West)

Cheshire

Detective Constable Gary Massey

Cumbria

Constable Michael Robinson

Greater Manchester

Constable Martin Renney

Constable John Johnston

Lancashire

Constable Stephen Worrall

Constable Claire Titterington

Merseyside

Sergeant James Saddoo

Constable Victoria Wilson

Constable Philip Quirk

#### Region 2 (North east)

Humberside

Constable Mark Thompson

Northumbria

Sergeant Nigel Dance

South Yorkshire

Constable Richard Bardsley

Constable John Medcraft

West Yorkshire

Sergeant Julian Rawthore

Constable Samantha Walton

Constable Craig Gallant

#### Region 3 (Midlands)

Warwickshire

Constable Jon Ashby

West Midlands

Constable Stuart Fitzgerald

West Mercia

Constable Matthew Crisp

Constable Richard Gray

(fallen officer)