



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

## **FCO Press Release: Honours for the best of Britain overseas**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) announces 90 awards for Britons in recognition of their exceptional service to Britain overseas.

The Diplomatic Service and Overseas Birthday 2015 Honours List recognises extraordinary people in a range of fields.

Mark Thomson OBE receives a CBE for services to global torture prevention, Peter and Margaret Long both receive MBEs for services to early childhood and special needs in Fiji, Nigel Lythgoe receives an OBE for his services to the Performing Arts and Charity, Elizabeth Mehta receives a MBE for services to education in India and Joanna Waddington receives a MBE for services to deprived children and communities in Kenya and Tanzania.

Sir Simon Fraser, Head of the Diplomatic Service, said:

*"I am delighted to see so many exceptional people recognised in the Birthday 2015 Honours list for their outstanding service to our country overseas."*

Other notable recipients include:

### **Kevin SPACEY FOWLER CBE**

Kevin Spacey, Artistic Director, The Old Vic, receives an honorary KBE for services to theatre, arts education and international culture

Kevin Spacey's leadership has seen The Old Vic returned to prominence as a destination theatre. From an artistic viewpoint, as well as new takes on established British, American and Irish classics, he has brought a number of American and European works previously unknown in the UK, to the British stage for the first time. He has also done much to secure the theatre's long term future over more than a decade as its Artistic Director and has appeared on its stage in a number of hugely popular and critically acclaimed productions. He has been instrumental in introducing a successful programme to support emerging talent and arts education initiatives and has encouraged both local community outreach projects and international collaborations. His time as Artistic Director of The Old Vic comes to an end this summer and this award is fitting recognition for the huge contribution he has made to British cultural life during his time there.

On learning of his award, Kevin Spacey said,

*"I am honoured and humbled by such recognition from The Queen. I must thank the British public for being so supportive of my efforts on behalf of The Old Vic. I feel like an adopted son."*

### **Iain DOUGLAS- HAMILTON OBE**

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Save the Elephants receives a CBE, for his services to wildlife conservation

Iain Douglas-Hamilton started his field work on elephants in 1965. He founded the research & conservation organization “Save the Elephants” in 1993 and has been researching elephant behaviour, promoting elephant conservation, and campaigning tirelessly against the illegal killing of elephants in Africa ever since. His detailed data on elephant mortality played a leading role in alerting the world to the drastic declines in elephant populations due to the increases in poaching for ivory. He also pioneered field tracking of elephants using GPS technology that is proving critical for both anti-poaching operations and landscape planning. In 2013 he co-founded the new Elephant Crisis Fund to raise funds and support the coalition of groups working to stop the killing, thwart the traffickers and end the demand for ivory. Iain advises the Prince’s Trust on the Elephant Protection Initiative campaign and his insights are valued and acknowledged by other highly regarded conservationists.

On learning of his award, Iain Douglas-Hamilton said,

*“Only united international action can save elephants in the wild. Together we can tackle the poachers, dismantle the criminal networks, and lower the demand for ivory. This award is a great honour for our team at Save the Elephants to work for the grand coalition needed to save the species.”*

### **Michael Joseph BIRCH and Xochiltzin De La Luz BIRCH**

Entrepreneurs receive OBEs for their services to technology and online services

Michael and Xochi Birch are a dynamic force in the UK-US entrepreneurial community – from pioneering one of the most popular social networks, Bebo, to founding an innovative business incubation lab in San Francisco called Monkey Inferno. They were instrumental in the meteoric success of charity:water, a global foundation based on innovative solutions to bring clean safe drinking water to every person on the planet. Both offer support to UK companies by mentoring and advising on scaling business in the US, raising funding in Silicon Valley and building the right networks. They make considerable investments in UK tech start-ups, reinvesting both their funds and expertise.

On learning of their awards, Michael and Xochiltzin Birch said,

*“We started all of our ventures together so are honoured to both be receiving an OBE today. Our first business was operated from our flat in Richmond in 1999. We continue to be excited about the opportunities for the tech industry in the UK.”*

### **James Anthony CAIN**

Founder, Thirsty Planet and fundraiser for Pump Aid receives an OBE for his services to impoverished communities in support of Pump Aid

James Cain, Managing Director of Harrogate Water Brands established Thirsty Planet as a dedicated charity bottled spring water. Sister company to Harrogate Spring Water, Thirsty Planet provides support to Pump Aid, a British Charity that helps rural communities in remote sub-Saharan Africa to have a constant source of safe, clean, drinkable water. Thirsty Planet’s guaranteed and consistent monthly donations ensure that Pump Aid has the financial security to plan ahead and expand its operations. The clean water which Pump Aid provides has a massive impact on health and has transformed communities, enabling children to go to school and crops to be irrigated. As Managing Director, James Cain has

ensured the business operates to the highest levels of accreditation. The state-of-the-art facility in Harrogate allows for one of the most efficient and environmentally sustainable operations in the UK.

On learning of his award, James Cain said,

*"I'm absolutely delighted and incredibly proud to have been awarded an OBE by Her Majesty The Queen. It is a tremendous honour and most importantly, it is a reflection of all the hard work and dedication of every person who works for Harrogate Water Brands and every supporter of Thirsty Planet and Pump Aid. Whilst I will be collecting the award at Buckingham Palace, it will be on behalf of all of my family and colleagues involved with the business."*

### **Dr Oliver Sam Spencer JOHNSON**

Programme Director, King's Sierra Leone Partnership receives an OBE for his services in the fight against Ebola

Dr Johnson arrived in Sierra Leone in January 2013 to work at Connaught Hospital in Freetown, aiming to support local colleagues to strengthen the government health system. When the first cases of Ebola occurred, Dr Johnson and his volunteer team decided to stay and help fight the outbreak. He responded with great intelligence, bravery and decisiveness and in the process saved many lives. He ensured that Connaught Hospital stayed open, successfully protected his staff and shifted quickly to being able to treat Ebola sufferers. He demonstrated that it was possible to rapidly set up safe Ebola units with limited resources and in partnership with local health workers. He was also critical to the formation of the Freetown Command Centre that coordinated the Ebola response in the city. His pioneering model, developed alongside colleagues from King's Health Partners, was successfully replicated at six other hospitals and had a profound impact on the UK's approach for defeating Ebola across Sierra Leone, therefore contributing to the UK effort to control the disease internationally.

On learning of his award, Dr Oliver Johnson said,

*"I am humbled to receive this award, which I accept on behalf of all those I have worked with in Sierra Leone. Everything we achieved is due to the efforts of extraordinary local health workers and international volunteers, who have bravely led the fight against Ebola and did not hesitate to put their lives at risk to save others. They are the real heroes of the response, and I would like to dedicate this award to them, especially those friends and colleagues who lost their lives to the disease. We will continue to fight the virus until we have seen the last case, and to work with our local partners to rebuild and strengthen their health system in the coming years."*

### **Dr Hania Morsi FADL**

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Khartoum Breast Cancer Centre, Sudan receives an OBE for her services to improving healthcare for women in Sudan

Dr Hania Morsi Fadl is the founder of the Khartoum Breast Cancer Centre opened in 2010, it was the first centre to diagnose and treat breast cancer in Sudan. Initially funded by her own money, Dr Fadl has continued to financially support the hospital and has established a charitable fund for those who cannot afford to pay for treatment. The Centre provides mammography screening for all women over 40 and brings a new approach of health care and health management to Sudan in terms of attention to infection control, nursing staff and

standards of patient care. To date the centre has seen 8000 patients and conducted over 500 operations. Committed and determined, Dr Fadl has personally driven forward the purchase of land, licences and equipment in Khartoum to create the Centre and was determined to get the best possible equipment for it. Dr Fadl also uses her contacts in the UK to bring specialists to Sudan to train Sudanese staff and create a professional cadre who now work at the Centre, ensuring the centre's long term sustainability.

On learning of her award, Dr Hania Morsi Fadl said,

*"I am honoured and proud to be receiving the OBE award. This is the first and best prestigious public recognition I have received. Such an achievement would not be possible without the resilience of the KBCC team and directives of the distinguished Board of Directors. The KBCC will continue to care for women with breast cancer under the Hania Fadl Foundation led by the principal trustees my beloved Hosham and Hadeel "*

**Notes for editors:**

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