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JEAN EDWARDS, 35 YEARS AT THE FESTIVAL OF BRITISH EVENTING

Jean Edwards has been volunteering at the Festival of British Eventing for 35 years. Now aged 83, Jean was a part of the very first event and has been involved ever since. In that time she has taken on a number of roles including; fence judging, dressage writing, working with The Pony Club score collecting and counting, this year she is managing the crossing at Avening Banks.

Jean first became involved with The Festival when her daughter took a job with Ian Adsetts, who had been involved in Badminton Horse Trials for a number of years. "Ian encouraged me to get involved with a very small event, where I was a fence judge. I must have done a good job, because the next thing I knew I was asked to come to Gatcombe Park to fence judge at this new event, The Festival that Captain Mark Phillips and HRH The Princess Royal were putting together," explains Jean.

Jean has since been involved in other events such as Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials and 'Little Gatcombe', but has always enjoyed her time at The Festival. "I lived in France between 2004 and 2009, and in that time, every year I received an invite to come back and volunteer at The Festival, I am very grateful for that, it meant I never missed out."

In 2008, Jean was presented with an Armada Dish by HRH The Princess Royal, for 25 years of Voluntary Service at The Festival of British Eventing. "I remember Ian saying to me, 'Jean make sure you are at the drinks reception this evening.' I hadn't planned on attending and I thought it was very odd that he had specifically mentioned it to me, but I am very glad I went. It is definitely one of my favourite memories, and it was such an honour to have the award presented by HRH The Princess Royal," commented Jean.

"I hope to carry on volunteering at the Festival for as long as I am allowed and able to. The event has so much local support and I think that's lovely. I don't feel like it has changed that much over the last 35 years. It always was very well organised, and it's great that there is so much to keep visitors entertained as well as the equestrian competitions," concluded Jean.

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