

Janet Wood Innovation Award - The latest



Many colleagues will remember Janet with great affection. She co-founded Datesand along with her husband Barry back in 1980 and very soon became the friendly, helpful, smart and extremely funny voice of the new company. From the outset, Janet quickly gained good and, in many cases, lifelong friends as she worked those very long hours. Datesand slowly but surely established itself as a trusted and reliable supplier to the research community. Janet turned her hand to any and every other job that needed doing – from making the mid-morning brew to visiting clients and everything in between.

Practical makes perfect

Like her husband Barry and later her two sons, Jonathon and Nick who followed their parents into the business, Janet very quickly realised that along with quality and great service, product development would be the key to the company's progress in our industry. In enrichment and animal welfare in particular, there was a very clear need for innovative products which would be of real practical assistance in safeguarding and enriching the lives of the animals and making the work of those who cared for them simpler and more effective. Janet and the Datesand team understood that the best way to discover products which really worked for the animals, is to ask the people who looked after them - the professional end-users. More than thirty years of cooperation with clients has seen the development and refinement of a host of products from safe disinfectants to the ground breaking Nestpak™, the compact Thermacage and the clear polycarbonate handling tubes.

Now there's a good idea!

It was this understanding that gave our designers the idea for the Janet Wood Innovation Award. Busy working on some new polycarbonate designs, Mark, our Brand Manager, originally thought of some kind of end-user focus group to



help to come up with new ideas and designs which would really work. The light-bulb moment then arrived as Mark thought of having a competition – aimed at end-users and judged by a panel including experts from our industry. Everyone likes a competition, especially in this industry it seems and with some attractive prizes on offer and the opportunity of a great launch pad coming up with the 2016 LASA Winter meeting, this seemed to be the perfect time. Naming the award after Janet seemed highly appropriate given her and her family's involvement in product development over so many years.

The competition was duly launched at LASA in 2016 and advertised widely using social and

industry print media, IAT Bulletin and Lab Animal Europe in particular. It was fully supported by LASA as well as the IAT and by our friends at Agenda. Application packs were soon sent out across the UK and a whole range of interesting and very innovative product ideas began to arrive. So many good ideas in fact that the expert judging panel was clearly really going to have its work cut out to decide on the eventual finalists and an actual winner!

After a careful reviewing process, nine applications were submitted to our expert judging



(L -R) Jonathon Wood - Claire Wood - Mark Johnson
Graham Morrissey - Mary Birch - Terry Priest

panel. After lengthy deliberations, these were reduced to the three most innovative and practical designs. These were then made into prototypes and displayed for peer review at Annual IAT Congress 2017. Attendees were able to take a close look at the designs and voted for their favourites. Colleagues who couldn't attend were able to vote via a Twitter Poll.

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Leading innovation

Since the initial release we have held three more competitions, producing three excellent winning products.

This includes Lisa Doar of CRUK Manchester's Mouse Swing in 2017, the Nombbrero designed by Vanessa Jenkins of Plymouth University in 2018 and most recently, the Rat Scratcher by Sarah Taylor from the University of Cambridge in 2019.



Lisa Doar - CRUK Manchester
Mouse Swing Prototype



Vanessa Jenkins - Plymouth University
Nombbrero



Sarah Taylor - University of Cambridge
Rat Scratcher

The 2019 Janet Wood Innovation Award also provided us with the C-Saw by Pete Willan and the Cage Companion by Luke Mercer of the Babraham Institute.

The final results for the 2019 competition were as follows...



50%



27%



23%

Could you be the next winner?

We are now at the beginning of the Janet Wood Innovation Award's fourth year. Applications are now being accepted from across the globe as the competition gains more and more international attraction.

As ever, Datesand are excited to see your new innovative designs. You can download an application pack from our www.jwiaward.co.uk website and submit it to us through email or post.

In association with:



Enter now at www.jwiaward.co.uk

