



Press Information

2009 GRIFFINS RICHARD DAVIS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RESULT IS A TIE Funeral Director and Racing Official share top honours

Former jockeys, **Alan Dempsey** and **Paul Robson** have tied for the Griffins Richard Davis Achievement Award, rewarding both their efforts in developing two very different careers after their retirement from race riding.

Alan and Paul joined former apprentice, **Victoria Behan** (who wins the Injured Jockeys Fund Progress Award) at Cheltenham on Sunday 15 November when they received their trophies in an official presentation in the paddock before racing. Terry Boothby, a Partner at Griffins presented The Achievement Award and Ian Balding (Injured Jockeys Fund Trustee and an Award Judge) presented The Progress Award.

- 26 year old **Paul Robson** rode 89 winners (from over 950 rides) as a conditional jockey from 2001-5, based with Jonjo O'Neill and then Nicky Richards. Shoulder injuries and weight problems eventually forced Paul to retire and look at other options. He took a joinery course organised through JETS and a three year apprenticeship before more recently starting his own Funeral directing business, with his father, Alan

"Paul has been very focussed and determined. He has analysed his options well, gathered new skills and now spotted an opportunity in the market, starting up Robsons Funeral Directors. His was an application full of enthusiasm," commented judge, Kate O'Neil.

- 32 year old **Alan Dempsey** rode 262 winners (from over 2000 rides) over jumps, taking the Amateur Championship in 1999 and the Conditional Championship the following year. He is now working as a Stipendiary Steward for the British Horseracing Authority. Alan's tally of race riding injuries include: a fractured skull, broken cheekbone, multiple fractures of the eye socket and major facial injuries that left him with 8 metal plates in his face.

"Alan has come back from some horrific falls, made good use of JETS early on and really worked hard to gather the right sort of experience to qualify him for his new role which may represent a more obvious choice for a jockey but has always been very tough to get in to. He got full marks for his commitment" commented Ian Balding.

"We just couldn't split Alan and Paul in terms of achievement, and it was the judge's unanimous decision to leave it as a tie," ends Balding.

Alan and Paul will therefore share The Griffins Richard Davis Achievement Award prize fund of £2,500 – each taking home £1250, to be spent on further career development and which is generously sponsored by Newbury-based Griffins, accountants and business development consultants to the racing and bloodstock industry.

Both Achievement Award winners fended off opposition from a very strong shortlist which demonstrates the broad and varying career choices jockeys are making after retirement from race riding. The other nominees' have taken on new roles ranging from an Accounting Technician and a Landscaper to a Tennis Coach.

This year's Injured Jockeys Fund Progress Award which goes to the applicant who the judges feel has made most progress in their career development over the past year, has been won by **Victoria Behan**.

- 23 year old Victoria was an apprentice with Dandy Nicholls (2005-7) riding 13 wins (from 98 starts) before retiring to start a family. She is now in the final year of her degree course in Equine Science and combines her study with the care of her two and a half year old son, Ryan, with partner, Silvestre de Sousa, a rising star within the weighing room. "Victoria's application was impressive because it showed commitment to study and a real focus on her end goal of a career in equine nutrition," commented Lisa Hancock, a judge for The Injured Jockeys Fund.

Victoria takes home a £2,000 prize.

JETS Manager and Career Coach, Lisa Delany said: "The competition this year was as strong as ever and all the applicants have demonstrated how much it really does pay to plan ahead early for life after race riding. The message we need to get across to jockeys now, is the importance of using their injury time to learn new skills and with so many good one day and short courses available out there today, this is very do-able".

The Griffins Richard Davis Achievement Award is judged by a panel of representatives from the Injured Jockeys Fund, Professional Jockeys Association, Racing Post, JETS and the sponsors, Griffins. The Progress Award is decided by the Injured Jockeys Fund Almoners and the Deputy Chief Executive, Lisa Hancock.

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