



PRESS INFORMATION

Yorkshire former jockeys sweep the board in 2011 Griffins Richard Davis Awards Racehorse Trainer and Chef take top honours

Two Malton-based former jockeys - **David O'Meara**, now a racehorse trainer in Nawton and **Gihan Arnolda**, who is now working and training as a Professional Chef in York - have taken top honours in this year's Griffins Richard Davis Awards.

This is the 16th year of The Griffins Richard Davis Awards - the annual career development honours established by The Jockeys Employment & Training Scheme in memory of the late Richard Davis who had started planning for his future before his fatal race fall in 1996. They recognise the effort, initiative and forethought which jockeys and former jockeys put into developing new careers.

Former jump jockey, David O'Meara took the **Griffins Achievement Award** (worth £2750) which goes to the jockey (or former jockey) judged to have achieved the most in developing a second career over the past year. He becomes the first trainer ever to take the Award. Former flat jockey, Gihan Arnolda, took the **Injured Jockeys Fund Progress Award** which goes to the individual who has achieved the most progress in their career development (worth £2000).

The winners received their awards on Sunday 13 November at Cheltenham in an official presentation in the paddock before racing.. Terry Boothby, a Partner at long term sponsors, Griffins, presented The Achievement Award and Ian Balding (Injured Jockeys Fund Trustee) presented The Progress Award.

O'MEARA TAKES GRIFFINS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

34 year old **David O'Meara** won the Foxhunters at Aintree as an amateur and went on to ride as a professional jump jockey for 8 years, from 2000 - 2008. He rode over 120 winners (from over 1600 rides), riding for trainers like Tim Easterby and Sue Smith and was associated with some 'big name' horses of that era, including *Mister McGoldrick* and *Turgeonev*.

David had always planned to make the transition from jockey to the training ranks and planned ahead accordingly, enlisting careers advice from JETS and investing in LGV driver training and qualifying through the official BHA Trainers' Modules at the Northern Racing College and British Racing School, in conjunction with his riding; working first as an Assistant Trainer. Just two seasons into his new career as a racehorse trainer with Helmsley Racing in Nawton and he has already trained over 90 winners on the flat and over jumps, including a Group 2 (*Blue Bajan*) and Listed Hurdle race winner (*Viva Colonia*).

"David impressed the judges with his determination and forward planning. He has proved in a very short time that he has got what it takes to be a trainer, which is definitely not an easy career option," commented judge, Terry Boothby, for sponsors, Griffins Accountants.

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“Because I knew what my dream job was, I realised quite early on that it made complete sense to undertake the courses I needed while I was still riding if at all possible. We now have more than 60 horses in the yard and our philosophy is very simple - based on teamwork and always putting the welfare of the horse first, winners will come,” explains David.

ARNOLDA TAKES THE IJF PROGRESS AWARD

30 year old **Gihan Arnolda** rode both as an apprentice (1998-2002) and later continued his flat race riding career between 2007-9. He had over 200 rides and rode 6 winners before his jockey career ended after he broke his pelvis in a bad race riding accident at Yarmouth.

Gihan turned to JETS for guidance on how to become a chef, his second choice of career and is now in his third year of a Diploma in Professional Cookery at York College. He gained Distinction marks at Level 1 and 2 and has been combining his training with work experience in a number of restaurants, including the Michelin-starred restaurant, Reads in Kent. Gihan is currently Chef de Partie at the four-star Royal York Hotel, in York and is also riding out locally to support his partner and two year old daughter.

“I had always been passionate about food and my goal is to become a Head Chef at either 4 or 5 star hotels or in fine dining establishments,” explains Gihan.

Salvatore Petruso, Head of Division for Hospitality at York College says: "Gihan has studied at with us for the last three years, progressing from Level 1 to Level 3. He is an inspirational mature student who works to a very high level. Last year he played an integral role in the York College team that won through to the semi-finals of the prestigious Toque d'Or competition, which was a tremendous achievement. Gihan has an impressive work experience record and is a fantastic role model for other students."

Adds Judge Lisa Hancock, for the Injured Jockeys Fund: “Gihan’s application was impressive because it shows that, with hard work and determination, jockeys can come back from career-ending injuries to achieve a secure future for themselves.”

“In the past, jockeys would be forced to retire through injury or otherwise, without any skills to fall back on and we would help pick up the pieces later down the line. Now we are delighted to see so many more becoming self-sufficient. We see our investment in JETS as being key to the long-term well-being of our potential beneficiaries in years to come,” ends Hancock.

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“David and Gihan represent opposite ends of the spectrum. Whilst most jockeys, once they retire, would like to stay in racing if they could, they realise that the opportunities can be limited. Our shortlist for the awards this year included jockeys who have turned their hands to anything from gas engineering to race planning. So, we have access to a whole wealth of talent for employers both in and outside racing,” ends JETS General Manager and Career Coach, Lisa Delany.

ends/13 November 2011

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Notes to Editors/follow

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. For detailed profiles of all the shortlisted candidates and a list of past winners http://www.jets-uk.org/latest_news.htm
2. The Griffins Richard Davis Achievement Award was 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 Chief Executive, Lisa Hancock, IJF Trustee Ian Balding, and the IJF team of Almoners.
3. Newbury-based Griffins are accountants and business advisers to the horseracing industry www.griffins.co.uk
4. JETS: is jointly funded from jockeys' own prize money contributions and The Injured Jockeys Fund. It is currently experiencing the highest level of demand for its services and now typically issues over £70,000 in training grants and scholarships annually. Since its inception in 1995, jockeys and the IJF have together invested well over £1 million in the scheme which has helped over 750 current and former jockeys with career advice and training in new skills, and assisted over 320 individuals in gaining employment after race-riding. www.jets-uk.org.
5. The Royal York Hotel & Events Centre is part of Principal Hayley Ltd. www.principal-hayley.com