



Jets graduates: firefighter Alan Daly (above) and TV's Jason Weaver



Coaching and advice: the invaluable services of Jets

ABOUT 800 jockeys have used the Jockeys Employment and Training Scheme (Jets), the non-profit organisation set up in 1995 to help them plan and achieve a secure future.

Newbury-based Jets offers a wide-ranging programme of career advice and new-skills training to assist jockeys in gaining further employment.

Funded in the past by jockeys' prize-money contributions plus additional funds from the Injured Jockeys Fund, Jets has recently been granted charitable status.

"I think Jets has legitimised second career choice," says general manager Lisa Delany, who recently completed ten years at the helm. "Jets had been going successfully for a number of years before I came on board but one of the things I wanted to make was a culture change, to educate younger jockeys coming into the sport to encourage them to look to the future. I think that's been hugely successful."

Jets offers any number of services from career coaching and advice to training in key skills like IT and media broadcasting, how to make job applications and interview technique, plus grants for individual training courses; it also offers potential employers a database of candidates.

"Every professional athlete faces the same transition, so we try to put a positive spin on the process, to show that it can be achievable," adds Delany. "We try not to be heavy-handed

because career transition is difficult enough as it is but if you retire at 30 or 35, you've got 30 more years, so obviously it is a very big deal. The change can be much less of a big deal if they plan for it."

Vocational training is expensive, and Jets – which can call on a multitude of senior jockeys past and present – takes up a significant proportion of such financial burden. "A jockey with a degree is very much an exception and in some cases they don't have GCSEs," she adds. "We can help them with night courses and college courses and things like that as well – we've got more applications than ever now. We get young conditional jockeys doing courses in things like plumbing. They see it as an essential move."

Although Jets has come a long way from its earliest days, it can still get flak in some quarters, as PJA chief executive Paul Struthers explains. "Jets sometimes gets criticised for effectively taking jockeys out of the industry," he says. "That is pretty easily dismissed I think. Not every jockey wants to stay in racing and if they have no aspirations to become a trainer or anything else – are you supposed to ignore them?"

Former PJA chief executive Michael

Caulfield vividly recalls a stigma attached to Jets when it started. "I remember the first meeting in the north-east," he says. "One of the jockeys asked for the curtains to be drawn so nobody could see inside in case they thought their bottle had gone! They didn't want anybody to know they were there and I understood why at the time. But when I look back at my time in racing, I think of Jets as one thing we got right."

Injury ended the career of Mick Fitzgerald in August 2008. "One of the great things about Jets is it makes it allowable for jockeys to think about a career after racing," he explains. "There used to be the old thing that if you were thinking about what you were going to do when you finished riding, then you weren't committed to the job."

"People were almost afraid to say they were planning for the future but now we're very lucky to have what I feel is certainly one of the best education programmes for jockeys coming through, maybe to start them off to media training that I did as part of one of the Jets schemes. I think it's a massive help."

▶▶Contact Jets at jets-uk.org or 01635 230410

'One of the great things about Jets is it makes it allowable for jockeys to think about a career after racing'

'There is a lot of personal sacrifice as a jockey. You need all your mental strength and the transition takes time'

Dale Gibson

come back to earth with a bump.

"They have maybe achieved their peak at 25," says Caulfield. "They are never going to get that level of adulation again – and it's the same for a jockey. They would like it to go on forever, but it can't."

Caulfield stresses that even such a massive change can be managed. "The word I refuse to use is retire," he says. "That's what your grandparents do when they're taking the dogs for a walk on the beach – this isn't retirement, it's the next cycle of change in your life. No one retires at the age of 34, even if you've got a gazillion pounds."

Caulfield speaks of the 'psychology of change'. "You go from denial, to resistance, to acceptance, to hope, to planning for it," he says. "Then you can start to control it. When you're told you can't ride any more or can't play football any more, of course it's a major issue but the problems come if

CASE STUDY MARK BRADBURNE

'With Jets I coordinated time off rather than sitting on my arse'

Cheltenham Festival-winning jockey Mark Bradburne called time on his career at the age of 35 in December last year to embark on a new life as an electrician, having retrained during two spells on the sidelines through injury.

"I was lucky because I found something that I wanted to do," says Bradburne, who rode more than 350 winners. "Basically, I decided to retire before things got too bad rather than somebody making the decision to retire me. I was getting plenty of rides but I'd got to the stage where the quality wasn't really what I'd hoped, so I thought it was better to stop than to start resenting the game."

"With help from Jets I actively coordinated my time off rather than sitting on my arse. I was always a

very vocational sort of guy, so this suited me.

"You've got to provide for the family," he adds. "I've got two small children and you've got to pay the bills. I love my job but there are times when I am stuck up in an attic with all sorts of muck falling on me that I think I'd rather not be there, but you've got to get on with it."

"There are two things I miss, though. One is the adrenaline of a winner – there is no way to replicate that. I can understand why someone like Richard Dunwoody goes off to get that buzz because he didn't want to retire."

"The second thing is the camaraderie. I do have a lot of fun with the boys on the building site but it's not quite the same as the weighing room where you are all going into battle every day."



you can't get out of denial. It is a horrible place to be and it breeds anger and bitterness – you really could end up being that bloke in the pub saying 'I used to be someone'.

"I'm not saying it is easy but you have to accept that here comes the next part of my life. Jockeys need to be

aware that they have a range of skills that are valuable in the wider world. They are committed and disciplined, they can communicate, they have had to overcome adversity and they have had to work in a pressurised environment. Those skills are priceless."

A life after racing – recent Jets graduates

Working in racing

Betting industry: Nathan Horrocks; bloodstock agent: Colm Sharkey; jockeys' agent: Sam Stronge; race planning: Ben Swarbrick; racing education: Ollie McPhail; racing official: Alan Dempsey; racing school instructor: Aaron Bateman; racing stable management: Allan Morris; racehorse trainer: David O'Meara; racing TV presenter: Jason Weaver

Working in equestrian industry

Farriery: Liam Cooper; equine dentistry: Frazer Houston; horsefeed sales: JP McNamara; saddlery: Robert Biddlecombe

Working (or running their own businesses) outside the horse world

Car valeting: John Bramhill; electrician/self-employed: Mark Bradburne; estate agency: Rupert Wakley; firefighter: Alan Daly; gaming machines/self-employed: Aaron Bates; landscaping/self-employed: James Diment; plumber/self-employed: Paul Fessey; professional cookery/chef: Gihan Arnolda; sports massage therapy & fitness coach/self-employed: Nathan Willmington; tree surgery: Steven Harrison

Further education/degree level

Equine business management: Padge Whelan; equine science: Victoria Behan; genetics: David Howard; human geography/philosophy: Cheryl Nosworthy; management: Joe Cornwall; primary school teaching: Luke Kilgariff

HORSE PLAY

Just for the fun of it

▶▶Googling a runner

Rex Whistler 5.40 Wolverhampton
The British artist, designer and illustrator (1905-1944) is perhaps best known for his book illustrations, particularly those that appeared in works by Evelyn Waugh and Walter de la Mare. He also achieved fame for his murals and trompe l'oeil paintings in the baroque tradition. He did many portraits of his close friend Lady Caroline Paget and others in London society such as Cecil Beaton and Edith Sitwell. He produced posters for Shell Petroleum and Radio Times and made designs for Wedgwood china based on drawings he made of the Devon village of Clovelly.

▶▶Easy as 1-2-3

- 1 Who was the last French-trained winner of Ascot's Coral Hurdle?
- 2 What is the name of the £2.5 million yearling half-brother to Authorized?
- 3 At which Worcestershire point-to-point course is the Lady Dudley Cup run?

Answers on page 82

▶▶Recognise me?



Answer on page 82

▶▶The List

Five facts about Admiral Rous

1. He was elected a steward of the Jockey Club in 1836 and undertook a mission to clean up racing.
2. In 1850 he published *The Laws and Practices of the Turf*.
3. In 1851 he devised the weight-for-age scale.
4. He had a well-known dislike of jockeys, owing to their reputation for cheating, and refused to dine with a jockey at his table.
5. He died in 1877 at the age of 82.

▶▶All mixed up

Rearrange the letters to reveal the name of the jockey who this year won the Grand National on Neptune Collonges.
Bald Car Joy (5,5)
Answer on page 82