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## Richard Davison

- Date of birth:** 20 September 1955.
- Lives:** Combridge, Staffordshire.
- Major achievements:** Richard won a team silver medal at the European Championships in 1993 with Master JCB and was a member of the bronze medal-winning team a decade later on home turf riding Ballaseyr Royale at the 2003 Hickstead European Championships.
- "Hickstead was the most emotional competition I have taken part in. I have never experienced such unbelievable concentration, if that is the right word, from the crowd. I was the last member of the team to go, so it all hinged on me. The audience must have been emotionally exhausted by the time I finished," he says.
- Richard also became the British Dressage National Champion in 2003 with Ballaseyr Royale.
- "I was only there because my family saw somewhere that a Mercedes-Benz was on offer. I had to get a late entry – the family has never taken such an interest in dressage. They were on the phone every ½hr during the competition to find out how I was doing," he says.
- As a member of the British team, Richard has competed in two Olympics, two World Equestrian Games and four European Championships. He was also a World Cup finalist four times.
- Richard was six times Britain's number one in the international dressage rider rankings in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, is a Fellow of the British Horse Society (BHS), was awarded the FEI (Fédération Equestre Internationale) Gold Badge of Honour in 2003 and the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) Medal of Honour for recognition of activities connected with international endeavour.
- In 2008, Richard was team captain for the British dressage team at the Beijing Olympics in Hong Kong.
- 2009 was a momentous year for Richard. In his role as Team Captain he led the triumphant GB dressage squad to team silver and an individual bronze medal at the European Championships in Windsor. He juggled this with a successful international competition schedule of his own, achieving five grand prix wins in succession with his new international prospect, Artemis. Their run of grand prix wins was followed by victory in the final of Germany's prestigious Kampmann Future Trophy, a competition for young grand prix horses between eight and ten years old. The year's results with the talented Artemis demonstrated the great potential the partnership has for the future.
- Richard's dedication and commitment to dressage was recognised at the 2009 Horse of the Year Show when he was presented with the HOYS Equestrian of the Year Award 2009. The award celebrates the considerable success he has achieved in his career to date.
- Current competition horses:** Artemis, a 16.2hh German-bred bay gelding by Florestan out of Delphine, born 1999 and owned by the Countess of Derby.
- First competitive experience:** "It was an egg-and-spoon race at my local riding school when I was eight, riding a grey pony called David."
- Trainer:** Gillian, Richard's wife, who is a former point-to-pointer and three-day event rider.
- Superstitions:** "I try not to be superstitious, but I don't walk under ladders and have to salute a magpie when I see one on its own."

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<b>Most admired riders:</b>	"It's a bit corny, but I admire all the top riders who have been around for a long time across all the disciplines, dressage, show jumping, eventing and racing."
<b>Qualities looked for in a dressage horse:</b>	"I like my horses hot and with a good engine. They have to have character, be real triers and tough – that doesn't always make them the easiest."
<b>Favourite dressage venues:</b>	"Abroad and outdoors, Aachen in Germany has its own atmosphere. Indoors, 's-Hertogenbosch in Holland has always been a favourite of mine. In this country, it would have to be Hickstead, which is fantastic, not just because we won a European medal there."
<b>What other career would you have chosen:</b>	"This varies from running a big business empire to maybe a barrister, but the truth is I couldn't do either; I'm only a horseman, but it's nice to dream."
<b>Favourite meal:</b>	"A proper hot curry."
<b>Favourite drink:</b>	Red wine.

Richard started weekly riding lessons when he was five and his parents bought him a pony when he was nine. When he finished school, Richard wanted to become a professional rider but his father made him join his PR and marketing business connected with the motor trade.

"I was a reluctant employee," says Richard.

After a couple of years, his father decided to give him a petrol station to run.

"After six months, I had a system worked out which meant it didn't take up much time. I would go hunting with the Meynell three days a week after sorting out the morning shift and turn up splattered in mud at the end of the day for the next change of shift. In the end, the staff called in Father and he eventually agreed to let me do horses," he says.

Richard went to event rider Sandra Pearson-Adams and she sent him on a dressage course run by Barbara Slane-Fleming, where he was "mesmerised" by dressage.

Through Lady Joicey and Arthur Kottas of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna he was exposed to the best of international and classical dressage.

Richard had a lucky break when Sir Anthony and Lady Bamford decided to back him and bought him Master JCB, with whom he won his first European team medal.

Richard's other equestrian involvements include being a regular columnist for *Horse & Hound* magazine, a former television commentator for Sky and Eurosport, the international rider representative for the FEI dressage committee, author of *Dressage Priority Points*, a member of the International Dressage Trainers Club since 1986, vice-president of the International Dressage Rider Club and founder member of the British Dressage International Trainers Club, a former member of the British Dressage committee and a former chairman of the BHS training and examinations committee.

