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RICHARD AND ATHALIE NAMED COUPLE OF THE YEAR

The Fletchers Celebrate Their Golden Wedding Anniversary



**Ant and Dec
 Remain
 Nation's
 Favourites**

By Helen Wilson

Award winning TV presenters Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly, better known as Ant and Dec, have achieved such popularity as a duo that they are hardly ever seen apart on screen. This has led to many joint nominations for awards such as the National Television Awards which are voted for by the public and reflect the nation's TV tastes.

The cheeky Geordie pair have picked up numerous popularity awards for their TV programmes "Saturday Night Takeaway" and "I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here" as well as for 'Most Popular Presenters' and 'Most Popular Entertainment Programme'. To have won those awards despite being caught up in a TV phone-in scandal at the time just proved how much they are indeed liked by the British public.

It will be interesting to see what the future holds for them but for the time being they undoubtedly are the Kings of entertainment on British television.

Read full story and interviews on page 6



WEATHER

It will be cloudy today with outbreaks of light rain and occasional sunny spells.

For full weather report see page 2

Richard and Athalie Fletcher have two reasons to celebrate this morning - not only are they celebrating their Golden wedding anniversary, they are also enjoying their first day as Britain's Couple of the Year. The Old Hunstanton pair beat off competition from nine other couples, including David and Victoria Beckham and Will and Jada Smith, as they earned the title of the UK's most lovestruck duo.

The award is the perfect way to celebrate 50 years of happily married life together. Richard and Athalie have gradually discovered the secret of a successful married life. "For me, it's all about give and take," explained Richard. "I do the giving and Athalie likes to take. Money, presents, compliments - you name it. Give and take. Seriously, though, the Couple of the Year award is not the biggest prize I've ever won. I got that when I married Athalie 50 years ago. She makes it really easy to be part of a successful couple."

Athalie also gave her recipe for a successful married life after being presented with the Couple of the Year trophy - or the "Golden Love Heart" as it is better known - at a glittering ceremony in London's West End. "I like to call Richard my Mr. Right," she said. "That's not because I think he's perfect - although he comes pretty close - it's just because, according to him, he's always right. I gave up arguing about it years ago. I just let him think he's right all the time now, and then pick up the pieces when he's eventually proved wrong."

As Britain's official Couple of the Year, Richard and Athalie will now be expected to pass on their secrets of success to partnerships less fortunate than their own. Richard will be traveling to America tomorrow to counsel McCartney on his failed relationship with Heather Mills, while Athalie will be meeting Joan Collins to discuss her past break-ups. She is expected to complete her task in early 2010.

The challenge now is to stay as loved-up over the next year so they can defend their trophy when they celebrate their next anniversary in 12 months time. "It doesn't surprise us that Richard and Athalie have been so happy together," said the couple's friends. "Everybody always describes marriage as the greatest institution - and we always knew both Richard and Athalie would end up in an institution."

