



## Will Carter's Interview with his Grandad John Carter

With Caroline Woolley

I would like to introduce Will Carter aged 10 years old. Will lives near Camborne in Cornwall, and spends almost all of his spare time at his Grandad John's farm at Delabole, North Cornwall. Will is the son of John's late son Barry, and he has a half brother Matthew who competed in the International Young Handlers competition in 2013.

John is President of the Cornwall Sheepdog Society.

Will took up looking after sheep and sheepdog trialing a few years ago when he was about 7 years of age. In 2015, he won the Open Novice Maltese – for the highest pointed Cornwall competitor, with Joe who was aged about 6. Joe's dam is from the late Stan Hills's line, he was bought from Paul Johnson. David Woods owned the sire. Will works with Blue as well, but he is 11 years old now. Jill is a puppy, now 6 months old. John is thinking of getting a younger dog for Will so that he can take part in the Nurseries next season.



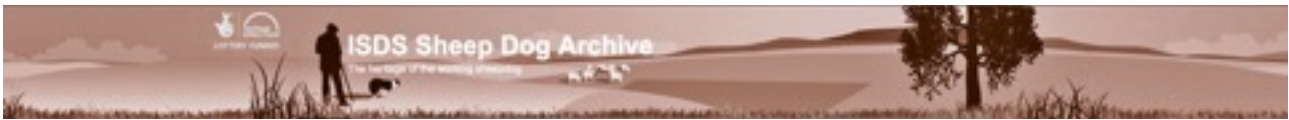
**Will Carter:** *Sometimes I work with Jess but she is hard to stop, isn't she Grandad? But she's OK at the pen but stays out too much.*

**John Carter:** *Bit of a 'heller' to stop when she is bringing sheep towards you but stops of her own accord when she's got them up to you.*

**Will:** *Rarely catches the gates! She is too close to them, but her outrun is alright but tends to flank them a lot. She's ideal for working sheep along a road then does the same at a trial.*

**John:** *She is calming down as she gets older.*

**Will:** *I think she is about 3 or 4 now.*



**Will:** *Grandad when did you first start trialling?*

**John:** *You'll have to ask Nanny as she knows more about that than I do! About 1984, Nanny says – so it must be right.*

**Will:** *But before then, have you always been a shepherd?*



**John:** *Always working sheep on the farm, but with other types of farm stock too. Always had milking cows as well. A shepherd works only sheep. Although I used to do a lot of contract shearing in my time.*

**Will:** *When did that start, was it when you left school?*

**John:** *Started before I left school really. Father was ill when I was about 14, and I never bothered much with school after that. Always helped out on the farm before that.*

**Will:** *Like I do now?*

**John:** *Yes, been involved with farming all my life.*

**Will:** *Must be about 65 years then, Grandad. What a long time! Cannot imagine me doing that and I definitely won't have Blue by then! Was your Dad a sheep farmer, and did he do trials like you do?*

**John:** *He was a sheep farmer but did not do trials – I don't think we had them down here then.*

**Will:** *Was Grandad's mum's family farmers too?*

**John:** *Yes, her two brothers farmed.*

**Will:** *When did you decide to go trialling?*



**John:** *Well, I didn't take that decision, it was decided for me. Chap down the road, Jimmy Cleave, went to a National Sheep Association demonstration one day and the Agricultural Training Board were there. Jimmy applied to do some lessons and he was put in touch with the late Harry Thomas. Jimmy persuaded me to go with him one weekend.*

**Will:** *Who was Harry Thomas?*

**John:** *One of the best, if not the best, sheepdog handler and triallist in Cornwall. Got into the International and the Supreme when it was in North Wales. He was my tutor. When I met him on that first day with Jimmy, I thought, well this is not that difficult. I took a bitch down with me – might have been Judy – and that's when it started. Got the bug, so to speak. I would have to milk the cows of a morning before I went trialing though.*

**Will:** *Why did you start?*

**John:** *Well, like I said, I thought it not that difficult so I thought to have a go and I got the 'bug'.*

**Will:** *But it is difficult!*

**John:** *And of course you get to travel places that you might not go to if you didn't have a dog in tow. Always a good 'Craic' to*

*use an Irish word that means 'a group of people having a good time'. It was hard work going trialing. But yes, nowadays, it is great to have Will alongside'.*

**Caroline:** *I can remember, Will, when you were about 6 or 7, standing at the post with Grandad, and it strikes me that you have what it takes to work a dog and sheep. Grandad must be happy about this.*

**John:** *Of course he is on his own now, and makes his own mistakes.*

**Will:** *I get problems with the driving sometimes, and Grandad helps.*

**John:** *We were over at Didling, and Will got into a bit of a pickle on the run that I swapped, and a someone in charge said that he would stop everything for Will to take his time and complete. Ray Edwards was judging and everyone helped.*





**John:** *Harry would not have given me as much slack, but then I was a lot older than Will and, more importantly, I was getting better than Harry that was the problem!*

**Will:** *Grandad which one was your best dog?*

**John:** *Don't know really. Old Mac was a good dog. And old Jess, when I got into the Team.*

**Will:** *Daddy's dog? You had a dog called Kip as well, but he got run over.*

**John:** *Old Mac was good so I started a breeding line with him. He was by Sidney Price's Davy. Carol Worgan bred old Mac, and Jess mentioned above is one of his daughters. Big Mac – he was a very big dog, would stop the cows at one look. Good eye – just the sort you need when you have got sheep in the yard. Many of the dogs who are descendants of Big Mac have the same ability – it all came from Sidney Price's Davy. In fact there are a number of J's that come from the line, Jake being another. Jen was a good bitch. We had two Jess's at the same time so we called one of them Jet.*

**John:** *There is the story about a trial I attended with Jet. I was talking to the late Steve Barry when someone approached the dog, and as she was always a bit nippy I said not to touch her because 'she'll 'ave 'ee'. Steve immediately said 'Oh, talking French now then!' i.e. 'C'est la vie' – hellish quick with his humour was that man. Very protective bitch was Jet.*

**John:** *The late Joe Watermore reckons he started trialing about the same day as me but was rarely in the finalists list. When he pitched up one day in a fairly new vehicle and remarked on its newness and he replied that he had to spend his winnings on something!*



**Will:** *Grandad, that's all the questions I can think of at the moment. Caroline said that she would come back next year to a trial and make a video recording of you and me trialing – is that OK?*

**John:** *Of course it is, lad.*

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