

Jackie Goulder from Pickering in North Yorkshire

It is now nearly 20 years since Jackie was interviewed in "Working Sheepdog News". At that time, Jackie was working at Eden Farm near Pickering in Yorkshire. She used to give duck demonstrations there, and was also a dab hand at training the parrots kept at the farm, to perform little tricks – a delight for the many youngsters who used to visit the attraction. Since those days, Jackie has relocated to Glebe Farm near Pickering where she, and Bob Harland, are kept busy with contract shepherding work, and raising and training dogs for both work and trials.

Jackie, you talked about the vital fit of the right dog for the right person. Have the intervening years since you were first interviewed confirmed you in that opinion? Can you point to any particular partnerships that you feel illustrate this gelling of man or woman and dog?



Jackie with Biggles and Sadghyl Pip

Jackie: Yes. Everything I have seen since we met twenty years ago at Eden Open farm, over the Dog n Duck Show, has confirmed that dogs and people are so varied in temperament, ability and experience that matching dog to owner is essential. Sadly, not often appreciated by the owners, whose choice of dog often does not reflect their real needs. I had a very slim, smooth coated collie bitch who excelled in humble disobedience, following her own course in the most annoyingly servile way. Any attempt on my part to push her, as an adult dog, past the initial puppyish ways into actual useful sheep handling behaviour caused her to just leave me. I found the ideal handler for her, someone who struck just the right balance of handling that got enough out of her to please them both. Which was far more than I ever could.

You have also long been an advocate of testing breeds other than the border collie around stock. Can you tell us a bit about your work in this area, the breeds you have worked with and the attributes they bring to the job?

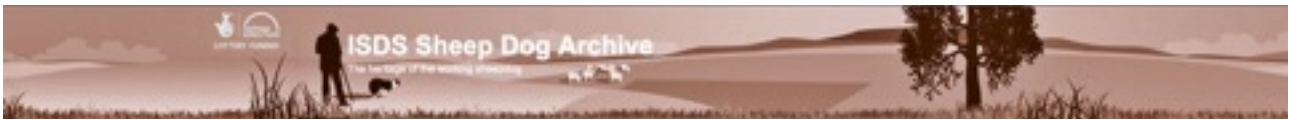
Jackie: Yes, I still welcome the other breed handlers and am very proud to see several have found places to continue working with their dogs as well as at Glebe Farm. One has actually bought land and sheep both to further her own education and help others find the

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chance to learn too. We like to bring in trainers from abroad once a year who are accustomed to handling other breeds. So the hobby is growing. It is seeing working instinct in its various forms emerge from different breeds that interests me, and I get a great deal of enjoyment from the pleasure dog and owner usually get from carefully controlled exposure to sheep. Owners are made very aware of the issues that may arise among livestock they might meet during their walks. Some people feel that it is unfair to “arouse” the working instinct and then never use it again. The people who do want to try sheep herding discover that we merely put the dog in a situation that gives us the chance to observe, safely for all concerned, their reactions. “Turning a dog on” is never the object of the exercise; just exposing the dog’s own response. The owner learns their dog’s response to sheep and together we work out a strategy that suits their purpose.

I have enjoyed working with so many lovely dogs of unexpected breeds, and the most unexpected of all is the boxer! The boxers I have met, in the hands of experienced and



devoted boxer owners, showed power, eye and gather! Beardies, Kelpies, Australian Cattle and Australian Shepherd dogs, German, Pyrenean and Belgian Shepherd dogs, small Valhunds, Corgis, Shetland and Polish Lowland sheepdogs have all met my dog training sheep – the Shetlands. The very best of them, my absolute favourite (that I know one should never have) was a rescue from a dogs’ home in Leeds. I am utterly convinced he was a Welsh sheepdog; his transformation once his owner started working him was awesome. He had sheep skills different in style from a Border Collie, but so effective, so biddable, so keen....

Zandie the kelpie

I have gained tremendously from my time with all the owners and their dogs. From every single one I learnt something about helping them “learn”. Because you don’t actually “train” sheepdogs. You work with the skills they already have, in the order they present them, put recognisable cues on the useful stuff they offer and carefully, with good timing and consistency, eliminate behaviour which is not helpful in getting the job done.

I have been to America to see all breeds herding at trials. I have visited Sweden, Austria and Belgium to help them train their dogs on sheep. USA, the Continent and Australia have different styles of competitions, and “Dog Schools”, where all breed handlers learn and compete on relatively docile sheep. Dog Schools with “schoolmaster” sheep are the

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only way that non-shepherding people have a chance to work with dogs on livestock. It is odd how keen people can be to work at shepherding, with no farming background at all, but I understand that very well. 35 years ago that was me. And to be where I'd like to be I need another 35 years...

A lot of your day to day work must involve the dogs. Can you give us your opinion on the current state of the working collie and how you feel trialling might affect its performance for work? Much is made by some of the fact that we are breeding too much for trialling and that this is leading to dogs less able to do a day's work on the hill. Do you feel this is a justified concern?

Jackie: For what it's worth I am very lucky to have the chances I do to work with sheep and dogs, not being "farmer bred". The thrill of co-operating in a difficult task with two other species is just the best thing. I don't believe that "show" breeding is about saving/preserving a breed. "Breeds" as in distinct, recognisable "types" of domestic canines, evolved to do a job. Only if that job continues in the same way will the breed continue to evolve in the same way. People must make wise choices when they choose the breeder of their pups. Get it for what you want it for. You can get an ISDS border collie in any size, any coat length, almost any shape and any colour. You can get an ISDS border collie to suit your particular requirements; they are the most diverse breed that could still be described as a breed. Show breeding, including all the responsible health checks, is evolution speeded up without the balance of actually doing whatever it was that they were selected for on the work front. Without showing, many working breeds would have re-

absorbed back into "just dogs". With showing, many show bred working breeds do exactly that, with the recognisable physical characteristics being all that's left of the dog type that the animal came from. Often two very different types appear under the same name from working sheep lines/other uses including pets. A great many dogs are pets, so there is no real harm done. The hill men breed their sort, if you want workers they are still being bred. As farming changes, so do the requirements. This is evolution in action.



Joss taking a well-earned drink

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In your book “Well Read Sheep” you write of needing to gain an understanding of the sheep. Do you think this is something that can be acquired by those from non farming backgrounds and how vital is it to achieving success on the trials field?

Trial dogs usually do also have work to do. Of those who are kept just to trial, most owners get some work as well for them or cleverly incorporate work type situations into training. People with no sheep are coming more and more into the trialling world and these people and their dogs do struggle to gain the vital experience they need. Learning to read sheep is the most important part of anything you try to do with or to them. Each packet of sheep you meet is fresh material. You and the dog have to apply and release pressure on them to get what you want.

Look at it this way; sheep are animals just like your dog. You want the sheep to do something. What can you give the sheep as a reward? Not a stroke on the head, a squeaky toy, a tuggy or a piece of liver cake. The only positive reward you can give your little flock is to leave them alone. In other words, use your dog to “correct” the sheep from “bad moves” by applying pressure – to hit a gate, say, and release the pressure while the sheep are moving nicely in the right direction. So timing is critical. Timing is ALWAYS critical. To give the sheep clear messages requires that you have an obedient dog taking correct commands. For this you need shed loads of sheep sense. It comes slowly and with experience.



Chap penning sheep

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Do you favour certain breeding lines and, if so, how do you incorporate them into your own breeding? I remember that quite a few of your canine companions were not of the orthodox black and white colouring! Do you think a merle is perceived by sheep in a different light and can it be as solid a worker?

Good outruns, independence, forceful pen work ... These qualities show up consistently in successful working lines. I like biddable good outrunning dogs myself. They usually have enough power for the situations I find myself in and are a type I find comfortable to train and work with. And...yes! I love the merle colour. Have always had them. I breed occasionally, and it is fascinating to pick up nuances of a previous dog in your line as you start a young dog of your own breeding. Fascinating and endearing, just to nod to an ancestor in a new one! A daughter of Killiebrae Joss, my nice merle, Anni Ritakellio's Comebye Jazz, was the first merle to run in and run off for the place of reserve in the team, in the 2015 English National. "Never seen a good one" and "Wouldn't have one as a gift" and "What a funny colour" and "What is it?"..... When you consider how many black and whites there are out there, and how relatively few make top dogs, a merle faces long odds to hold its own in the line up. Sheep can be disrespectful of the pattern, but good merles can handle them. Good merles are out there!

Are there any particular handlers who have influenced you in your shepherding life? Can you tell us a bit about the collies you have worked and trialled with over the years? I remember Sandie. Was she special to you and what made her so? Are there any particular trials you have good memories of?



The generosity of the many who have helped me learn to handle dogs and sheep knows no bounds. Two wonderful ATB instructors, Maurice Collin and Allan Heaton come to mind. I am still listening to and watching

the people around me because I need to know as much again as I have gained in the past 25 years. As much again! More! And you learn so much just watching, watching and listening.

Fleck, my first collie, was a blue merle, and she did well, bearing in mind what a handicap I was to her. Sandie was a red tri mottle, and a wonderful dog. Took me places and taught me stuff I needed to know. It was with her, when she was about four and a half, that I suddenly felt a team.

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After her, Killiebrae Joss. A legend in his own lifetime. He took me to Lonscale in Keswick, another quantum leap for me. Joss gave me the enormous satisfaction of being, at the Deerplay Hill Trial, 2 points away from going back on the second day. Anyone who has been to the Deerplay Hill Trial will know how big that is! I have his two and a half year old grandson, Cookie, for next winter's nurseries. And two gorgeous merle sisters for the winter after that. These are great great grand daughters of Joss, and daughters of Chap ROM, Chap is a black and white smooth dog out of an unregistered bitch, Skip, by Bob Harland's old Shep. He has given me a return trip to Deerplay, 3 open wins, two runs behind us in the English National and a very fine, black, white and tan smooth coated son called Valmis Jupiter. Looking good to go.



Valmis Jupiter

Thank you to Jackie for providing the ISDS Sheepdog Archive with an update.