

# Border Heartbeat



*The Official Newsletter  
of the  
Midlands Border Collie Club  
Winter 2011*

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|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
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## *A Word From The Editor*

Your Committee & Officers wish you all a very Merry Christmas & a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year!

Border Heartbeat tries to bring you items of interest and we're delighted that the feedback from our readers continues to be excellent. In this issue we offer you a couple of very thought-provoking articles..... Many thanks go to those who've contributed – we couldn't do it without you ☺ and your Editor is always extremely grateful!

As I mentioned last Christmas, it's important to take special care that our dogs don't get hold of chocolates, grapes or raisins over the Festive Season. These things are dangerous (often fatal) so we need to make a supreme effort. With that in mind I once again offer my services - send all your chocolate to me and I'll make sure it's safely disposed of.....

Our website <http://www.midlandsbordercollieclub.com> is packed full of news, show results & interesting articles. There are also the archives to dip into, so please visit soon!

*Sheila*

## *Submission Of Articles*

Any article you submit must be your own work, **or** you must have permission from the author/hold the copyright. Submitting your article to MBCC grants us the right to publish it in Border Heartbeat. It does not entitle you to any form of compensation, financial or otherwise. We reserve the right to reject an article if we feel it to be unsuitable. We reserve the right to correct spelling and/or grammar should that be necessary. Articles should preferably be submitted in Word or Notepad electronic format via email.

**Please note** – the views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by the Midlands Border Collie Club or the Editor.

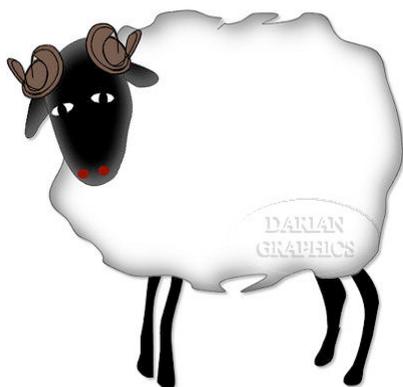
## *Forthcoming Events 2012:*

Jan 22: Agility Show  
Jan 30 – Feb 5: Championship Working Trial  
Feb 4: Championship Breed Show  
Feb 25: AGM & Judging Assessment  
April 7: Open Obedience Show  
April 9: Championship Obedience Show  
May 5: The 2nd annual Border Collie Convention  
Aug 10 Open Working Trial  
Oct 27 Open Breed Show followed by Border Collie of the Year 2011

## *Chairman's Chunters*

The 2011 season is almost at a close and MBCC has again undertaken their shows and events in a happy competent manner. We continue to achieve all our goals, this is due to the dedication and hard work of my committee - we all owe them our thanks.

This year's shows were well supported and we enjoyed kind weather which always makes the running of events more pleasurable. Next year we have two extra events. One is the Border Collie of the Year. This will take place in the afternoon of our October show in the KC building at Stoneleigh. We have chosen our 3 judges and are now planning this event. We hope to give all that qualify a special day and extend a warm welcome to all who attend.



Our other extra event is the Border Collie Convention, which will be held in May at Moira. Details of this plus a booking form can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. We expect demand to be high for the limited number of places available, so don't leave it too late to apply!

Our Agility team has achieved great things this year. Please give them your support at Crufts as they have worked extremely hard.

We will soon be advertising for a club secretary. If you think you can blend in with the rest of the MBCC committee please apply in writing. This position will receive a small salary.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy Christmas and a successful 2012,

**Bob Tunnicliff**  
MBCC Chairman

## Secretary's Salutations

Last time I wrote my notes from a deck chair at the Obedience Show, what a difference a few months make, now we have short days and long nights which play havoc with dog walking as everything has to be condensed into a few short hours. Bring back the lovely long summer nights when my dogs accompanied me (or I them) across the fields, with the promise of a half-hearted chase of a rabbit or hare (definitely not me) to look forward to. However on the up side, I do love curling up on the sofa in front of the log burner with my assortment of dogs either sitting on my legs or snuggled up close with a good book or (don't tell anyone) a trashy reality television program to watch.



This is a quiet time of year for my secretarial duties, a time to catch my breath before the onslaught which starts in January with the Championship Working Trial; the Open Agility Show; The Championship Breed Show; the Open Obedience and the Championship Obedience Show all in a few months. Further details for all of our events can be found on the website.

We also have a convention to look forward to on 5<sup>th</sup> May and a judging seminar which follows the AGM in February.

If you are interested in working your dog why not turn up for one of our working events to see how these events are run and what's involved, you are guaranteed a welcome.

Have fun with your dogs, they are with us for such a short time,

**Val Earp**  
MBCC Secretary

## MBCC Working Trials News

November 2011

We are now into one of the busiest times of the Working Trials calendar as Spring and Autumn/Winter are when most Trials are held. This is obviously due the availability of land for the tracking and we in the sport are truly indebted to the generosity of the farmers who allow us to use their land, not only for the competitions, but also for training.

The 2011 Kennel Club Working Trials Championships took place in October at Lowther Hall in Yorkshire. This year's event was hosted by The Yorkshire Working Trials Society. Sue McCrilly and myself attended this event on behalf of our club on a fact finding mission to prepare for MBCC hosting this Kennel Club prestigious event in 2013. Yorkshire WTS were aware of why we were there and made us very welcome and answered all our questions and went out of their way to give us all the information that they thought we would need.

Both Yorkshire WTS and Midland Counties German Shepherd Association have offered help and bodies for our 2013 KCCs.

Whilst at these KCCs I, and Sue J (on the Thursday), took lots of photographs over the three days and I have put together an entertaining video slide show set to music of the three days events: TD Tracking Day 1, TD Tracking Day 2, PD Tracking, TD Control & Agility, PD Control & Agility, PD Patrol Round and The Presentations, on a DVD. This DVD is for sale to raise funds for the MBCC Working Trials Fund. The cost of the DVD, along with a second DVD with a file containing all the photographs, is £9.95 + £2 p&p. The DVD can be ordered on the Working Trials World website: [www.workingtrialsworld.co.uk](http://www.workingtrialsworld.co.uk) or contact me direct on 01664 444310.

On the subject of Fund Raising for the club's 2013 KCCs it is my intention for the Working Trials Section of MBCC to raise all the necessary funds to host the event without dipping into club funds.

This is not to say that I do not need the practical and active help of as many of the Committee and Members as I can get! We can expect to get just over half of the cost of running the event from the Kennel Club and the main sponsors, Arden Grange. This still leaves me with raising the rest of about £3,000 to £3,500 over the next two years.

We already have a number of events planned, apart from the 2011 KCC DVD, and I do know that some club committee members have already started fund raising for us. In conjunction with Sheilagh Hyde we are organising some events over the Easter period at our Championship Obedience Show weekend. We plan to have a Doggy Fun Day one day and I am putting together a Working Trials Experience Day for the Friday.

Also in the planning stage with principals agreeing is a Clicker Training Day with Anne Bussey, a training day with Dave Olley from Dog Friendly Training in Yorkshire plus various other training days over the two years with top dog handlers and trainers. I also have in mind a summer barbecue combined with a Working Trials Experience Day, or something on a similar vein.

I had taken loads of photos at our Open Breed Show to do another DVD to sell to raise funds but it was pointed out that some folks may not like their show dogs casually photographed for fun as it may not show them in their best light, so I shelved the idea.

If anyone has any other ideas for fund raising or would like to volunteer holding an event to support the MBCC 2013 Working Trial Championships, no matter from which discipline, I would be very grateful.

**Barrie James**





[www.bordercollieconvention.com](http://www.bordercollieconvention.com)

5th May 2012

Venue: The Miners' Welfare Centre, Bath Lane, Moira, Derbyshire, DE12 6BP

**The Midlands Border Collie Club** extends a warm invitation to all Border Collie enthusiasts to join us for the second "Border Collie Convention".

**This is once again a superb opportunity** for current & potential judges, exhibitors, breeders & owners to enjoy an interesting & informative day.

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**Our speakers** judge at CC level in the UK and also judge overseas. They are:

**Ms Jo Ratcliffe** (Grandver/Arrodare) & **Mr Ross Green** (Fayken), speaking on the **Illustrated Breed Standard**

**Mrs Kathie Kinton** (Kinaway), speaking on **Border Collie Health Matters**

**Mrs Carole Coode** (Warringah Gundogs), speaking on **A Practical Approach to Breeding**

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On conclusion of the individual seminars our speakers and MBCC's Chairman will then form a panel for a **Q & A session**. This is your opportunity to ask questions relating to the day & to the Breed.

This will be a full day event, with the first seminar commencing promptly at 9 am and we anticipate completion of the Q & A section at 4.30-5pm. The event will result in a **certificate of attendance of a Breed Specific Seminar**.

Tickets must be booked and pre-paid and you will find a booking form below. If you have any further queries, please contact Sheila Gay Tel: 01789 550888 ~ email [convention@darianbc.com](mailto:convention@darianbc.com)

**PLEASE NOTE:** We have a limit on the number of available tickets, so please book early. The cost (which includes lunch) is £20 per person (Juniors under 16 £10).

Midlands  
Border Collie Club



## Border Collie Convention ~ Booking Form

May 5<sup>th</sup> 2012

The Miners' Welfare Centre, Bath Lane, Moira, Derbyshire, DE12 6BP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of tickets required (\* see N.B. below): Adult \_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print your details clearly. Please note that tickets will be issued by email wherever possible)

**Fee: £20** (£10 Juniors under 16), to include lunch. Please send this completed form, together with the correct fee/s (cheques payable to Midlands Border Collie Club) to:

Mrs Sheila Gay, 24 Burbage Avenue, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 0DU.

The event will open with coffee/tea at 8.30 am and the first seminar will commence promptly at 9 am. Further details including directions to the venue can be found on the Convention website: <http://www.bordercollieconvention.com>

Sheila can be contacted on 01789 550888 or email [convention@darianbc.com](mailto:convention@darianbc.com) prior to the day and via mobile 07561 106024 on the day.

**N.B.** If you are applying for more than one ticket, please list all names clearly below, as you would like them to appear on the certificates of attendance:

## Kennel Tales

Welcome to our look at some of the Kennel Names within our breed. How did their owners first become involved in the wonderful world of Border Collies and how did their affix come into being? Our thanks to Ann Jordan, of the Cories kennel, who has kindly contributed this issue's instalment.



I slid into Border Collies off the back of German Shepherds as many others did in those far-off days, almost fifty years ago, through obedience. I had 'obtained' a farm collie bitch, which was the worst thing I could have done because she was determined to round up everything and steadfastly refused to learn obedience... the only Collie I ever gave up on and she could have been the first and last! She returned to the farm and settled into work as if she'd been there all her life - and that fascinated me.

I had to get to know how such a strong instinct could survive two years of a pet existence and obedience training without a blemish on her ability to bring a hundred sheep into the yard at the first attempt! There had to be something more to find out about this breed.

I eventually had another, Yealand Della, who thankfully worked well in obedience and was steadily taking me through the levels of obedience and was listed in the top ten obedience dogs at the time. Unfortunately I had to leave to live in Australia for some years, so Del was taken by a friend but never worked again. When I returned I was on the hunt for another dog.

In the Obedience rings at this time was Audrey Hart and her Sadghyls. Everybody at the top in Obedience had a Sadghyl dog. Tricolours and Blue Merles were everywhere. There was even one on Blue Peter! I lived just a few miles from Audrey, so we met and the result was Sadghyl Coire. Coire was so named because her dam was called Tarn, which means 'a still mountain pool'. A coire is also a still mountain pool. This was my first I.S.D.S. registered bitch. Her sire was Sadghyl Craig CDex UD, who was also the sire of Blue Peter's Shep.

As Audrey also worked sheep with her dogs this was the perfect opportunity to have a go myself. I have to say, we weren't very successful but at least we tried... and this was the start of everything as far as I was concerned.

The Kennel Club eventually recognised the breed just after Coire had her first litter. So a prefix was needed. I submitted Coires, as I also now held that prefix with the ISDS but a letter from the KC brought disappointment when they said someone already had that prefix!

Not to be beaten, I swapped the letters around and amazingly the Kennel Club accepted Cories. So now I have two prefixes but whoever from the two camps (I.S.D.S. or Kennel Club) sees the other prefix knows who the breeder is but just thinks it's a spelling mistake! Bingo!

Coire's son, Coires Sweep, was my first show dog, entered in one of the first Border Collie Club of GB's Breed/Obedience shows just for fun because he was entered in the obedience... and ended up Res BIS. Not a real show dog by today's standards, but none of them were at the beginning. Sweep and I travelled the length and breadth of the Country attending Champ Shows to boost the entries so we could get CCs. It was such fun and a bus-load of madheads with their Border collies was a familiar sight in the car parks and a butt of jokes from many Judges whose rings we unceremoniously invaded.

The rest is history, I suppose, but whilst I may have semi-abandoned the Show Rings my dogs have the opportunity to work my 'Cories' flock of pedigree Hebridean Sheep, trot

alongside my 'Cories' driving ponies and battle brains with my 'Cories' Kelpies. We are all doing very nicely thank you and are having FUN!

The 'Cories' prefix is entering another generation with my daughter, Louise, but the I.S.D.S. has proved awkward and won't let her use the Coires prefix so she has cleverly opted for a soundalike - 'Quories'.

**Ann Jordan**

### *Musings on the Changing Face of Dog Showing*

(First published in Freedom of Spirit Magazine and reproduced with kind permission of the editor)

Sometimes I find it really hard to work out what I want to write – and other times there is too much I want to say! There are those of course who know me well and often claim they can't get a word in edgewise – this may be one of those days!

I've gone on and on over the years about showing dogs being a hobby – you'll all be sick of me saying that but when I started out showing my Layla, for a bit of fun, I treated it as just that – something I did every week or so with my girl and something that both Layla and I enjoyed. I still have that same thought – and now I go out with Teddy, or Ellie or Bruce or occasionally one of the others – it is still my HOBBY – albeit expensive now with the rising price of both entries and fuel – but it still something I do to have a day out with the dog(s) and with friends. Sadly it seems a lot of people don't view it that way anymore!

When I was a kid we had school sports days – and they were competitive, the idea was to be the one who ran or jumped the faster/longest/highest .... I was never a winner, but I learnt a very important lesson then – how to LOSE without, as the saying goes now, throwing my dummy out of the pram. We were well taught by our teachers, our parents, that winning wasn't the be all and end of all existence – it was part of life, if you won you were lucky, had done well, but if you lost you had tried your best and as long as you had indeed tried then that was all anyone could expect. And I don't remember any of us throwing a tantrum or going home in tears. We were taught the value of sportsmanship.

Now we have people coming into dog showing with the express intention of winning – not settling for anything less than top honours. I have seen people come along with their brand new junior handler child – and expect them to win – and if they don't they blame the judge, the other entrants, the dog – anyone but the child who hasn't the experience yet – no 'well done, better luck next time, we need to help you with ...' it's 'well the judge was blind/stupid/friends with the other kid's mother' – hardly sportsmanship is it? Of course it's exactly the same with the adults – they have a new puppy, possibly from a well known breeder, and that kennel has been winning a lot – so they expect, with their puppy, to win straight away and to carry on winning – and if they don't win they stomp (good word that) out of the ring and back to the benches complaining that the judge is 'blind/stupid ....'. And they seem incapable of accepting defeat gracefully; they don't know how to be sporting and lose with dignity.

Taken to an extreme I have seen people walk out of the ring and dump a low placed prize card in the nearest bin or tear it up – I have heard of people who just snatch the card and leave without so much as a thank you – I was always taught that you collected your prize card and waited until everyone else had theirs - manners again – but now it seems normal to leave and ignore those two words which we were taught right from the very beginning – thank you. This isn't just bad sportsmanship this is bad manners and downright rude.

One of life's hardest lessons probably is learning to lose – and to lose well; being able to congratulate those who beat you and to walk from the ring with your head held high and with the thought that there is always a next time and next time it might be you. It's a hard but necessary fact of life, especially in dog showing where different judges will have different opinions, that you have to be able to take the rough with the smooth.

There is another side to the coin when we talk about people's opinions of judges – the fact that there have been genuine cases where the judge has behaved in an unacceptable manner – a case in point from a few years ago when the judge dismissed a dog from the ring without cause or reason – this was actually taken to the Kennel Club and the judge was fined – so it does sometimes get put right. There are judges out there who must spend a lot of time reading the results and looking at pictures of dogs and their handlers so that they 'get it right' when they judge – or so it seems when the dog which wins is clearly lame!

Obviously judges have different interpretations of the breed standard – but what must be remembered is that the dog in front of the judge should meet the criteria of that breed standard – and be FIT FOR FUNCTION. And this is where people are beginning to question some of the judging – I am, obviously, talking about my own breed here – and how they should look, how they should move – they do not have to be marked 'correctly' – there is no such thing as 'correct' markings in a Border Collie and anyone who tells you there is needs to go and re-read the breed standard! They do not need to be 'flashy', they do not need to have a full white collar, they do not need a white blaze up the centre of their face, none of this – what they DO need is to be able to MOVE (free, smooth and tireless, with minimum lift of feet, conveying impression of ability to move with great stealth and speed), to be well muscled – they should appear 'well proportioned, smooth outline, showing quality, gracefulness and perfect balance, combined with sufficient substance to give impression of endurance'. The only requirement with ears is that they be of 'medium size and texture, set well part. Carried erect or semi-erect and sensitive in use'. Ours is not a breed judged on its head, its markings, its length of coat (moderately long) or its handler please – it's judged on its overall appearance and its ability to MOVE.

To assess this movement it is necessary to watch it from all angles – both going away from you, coming towards you and most importantly from the side – to see the way the dog drops and drives as it moves at speed – as if it was on an outrun to fetch its sheep. If you don't assess this movement you are not seeing that all important athletic profile which is seen in the true Border Collie.

PLEASE let's get our breed back to just that – a 'tenacious, hard working sheepdog, of great tractability' – for that is truly fit for function.

It is the breed I fell in love with and it needs to be protected from those who are breeding it purely to win in the show ring at the expense of the true qualities of the breed.

**Hilary Kerr**

### *Collie Mixtures*

I wonder how many readers have walked out with their collie to have someone ask, "It isn't pure bred is it?" And even worse, "What breed is it?" How dare they? Our much loved collies being maligned because they don't understand all that's gone into them!

It is true that they can come in many different shapes, sizes and colours but then has there ever really been a breed that has needed to be so versatile? The Border Collie's first title was that of Sheepdog, a dog bred to be able to work sheep. The title and the breeding doesn't mean it has to work sheep but its build and intelligence should be of such that it could work sheep. A sheepdog has to be capable of being able to do many different things, it has to be able to gather sheep in, to drive them away, to shed a number of sheep from a flock and then shed one from that number, but more importantly – it has to be a thinker! It's no good sending a collie up a hill to gather sheep if it can't work out it has to bring them all and not just the first ones it sees. Neither is it any good if it can't figure out a way to let the shepherd know that it's left one behind because it is poorly. It also has to have the sense to know that

to leave a lame one behind could result in that sheep hobbling in a different direction and getting lost (making the job even harder for both man and dog!). From that intelligent realisation it then has to work out how to get the flock on its way back to the fold and to keep going back for the lame one without losing or endangering either. When the sheep are finally gathered in the dog's work isn't finished, it must know how to deal with truculent ewes and stubborn rams, how to be firm with giddy youngsters and then switch in the blink of an eye to a gentle guardian when a lost lamb needs to find its mother. Above all a sheepdog has to remain calm. If it becomes excitable it won't be able to think clearly and then work. An excitable dog only succeeds in getting the sheep and shepherd in a muddle. In the days before quad bikes and 4x4's shepherd and dog would spend every day in each other's company. They would be on the same wave length and would understand each other with little need for words. In the modern world, things have changed, there are fewer shepherds working the hills and there are more companion dog owners. But our dogs haven't changed! They still need to use their brains, they still need less talk and more companionship and they still need to be kept calm. They also need to be understood as individuals explained perfectly in the quote: "If I have five different dogs, then I have to be five different men!" We all have to adapt to each dog, we can't expect them to change for us. But with such variations in the breed, we need to be able to identify the different characteristics in each dog to be able to understand them. From the above paragraph we can see why our ancestors needed to breed something special but how did they get them to be so intelligent and versatile?

We are not the founders of the collie, we have not discovered something amazing, our ancestors did that! Centuries before the industrial revolution, Britain's wealth was built on wool. Domestic sheep were herded by Neolithic man and its likely sheepdogs were associated with him as well. The Romans brought pastoral dogs to Britain as they did sheep and John Caius, a doctor writing in the 1500s, mentions the "shepherd's dogge", in fact his could be the earliest reference to the way British sheepdogs worked. But these were collies in the making, they hadn't quite got there so long ago. Other breeds will have been introduced into the gene pool over hundreds of years, to try and perfect what was already on its way to being one of the longest established breeds of working dogs.

Greyhounds are reputed to be connected to ancient Egypt, where depictions of smooth-coated sighthound types have been found, such as the Saluki. Analyses of DNA reported in 2004 suggest however, that the Greyhound is not closely related to these breeds but is a close relative to herding dogs. The turn of speed a greyhound can introduce into a herding dog, would be valuable.

Deerhounds have a number of characteristics that set them apart. While not as fast as a Greyhound on a smooth, firm surface, once the going gets rough or heavy they can outrun a Greyhound. The environment in which they worked, the cool, often wet, and hilly Scottish Highland Glens, contributed to the larger, rough-coated appearance of the breed and would provide the stamina and agile body needed in a shepherd's hill dog.

In 1790, Thomas Bewick wrote, 'The Cur Dog is a trusty and useful servant to the farmer and grazier and, although it is not taken notice of by naturalists as a distinct race, it is now so generally used, especially in the North of England, and such great attention is paid in breeding it, that we cannot help considering it as a permanent kind. They are mostly black and white in colour with their ears are half-pricked'.

Unlike many canids, foxes are not usually pack animals. Typically, they live in small family groups, and are opportunistic feeders that hunt live prey, such as rodents, grasshoppers and insects, using a pouncing technique practised from an early age. Foxes are omnivores and their diet also includes a wide variety of fruits and berries.

In the last two hundred years we have gone from around forty breeds of dogs to over four hundred breeds, but dogs are dogs and they all come from the same foundation *Canis Lupus*. Wolves are social predators, their packs are small and resemble a family unit usually consisting of biological offspring and occasionally adopted subordinates. Wolf is the foundation of all our dogs and the forty breeds evolved from a human need for help to speed up, or protect, certain aspects of their lives. Coach dogs, guarding dogs, dogs to hunt vermin, dogs to hunt for food, dogs to protect sheep and cattle, dogs to herd sheep and cattle, the

list is endless but the main criteria all those years ago was only to mix breeding to improve upon the existing breed's ability to do the job it was needed for – not for appearance or human gain, other than ease of work and safety.

Border Collies as we know them today didn't suddenly materialise. The breed is a result of careful breeding by such people as Adam Telfer with Hemp, born in 1893. This great dog was followed by such masters as Kep, 1901, who could control sheep with his strong eye. Wilson's Cap who lived through the war years and had no trialling career but sired many amazing pups, proving that accolades are not as important as good breeding. From Cap's line came the great Wiston Cap in 1963. The shepherds who bred these dogs, and many others like them, worked hard to keep the strong lines of the breed secure. Their predecessors worked just as hard and probably without realising what a great gift they were leaving for these shepherds.

A Border Collie needs to be able to produce speed – Greyhound. Some collies have to be able to produce speed and be agile on hilly and rough ground – Deerhound. A wish to serve, be loyal and work on the land alongside human beings – The Cur. Be able to work large animals such as cattle and not be phased by their size – The Wolf. Put all these into the gene pool over a period of hundreds of years and bingo, you have the foundation genes to create the perfect working companion – the Border Collie.

There are many small boned Border Collies to be seen. They are fox like in appearance with fine features, quick movements and can often be quite shy and nervous of strangers. They will like to dig and if they are frightened are not beyond burying themselves in the undergrowth or even digging a hole to hide in. These dogs are usually very intelligent but also very sensitive, they need careful handling and often don't mature and feel confident until they reach four or five years old. Their part in the gene pool is to provide stealth and cunning and to be able to 'read' a situation before deciding how to deal with it. These dogs can work on their own initiative once they feel confident in their handler.

Larger collies are often steadier than the fox like ones and although sensitive to situations, are not as easily affected by them. They will bring speed to the gene pool and a brave heart, but the faster ones will not be as nimble as the smaller ones. The medium ones will bring both speed and stamina, able to work on the hills and although not as fast as others they will be far more able to work on rough ground. Often these dogs will work a large flock and the more fox like ones will use their cunning to seek out and outwit sheep that have gone astray.

So how many times have you seen a collie that is lean and resembles a greyhound, or one lean but with a long coat, or a small fox like one and been told they are a collie cross? Collies come in all shapes and sizes, a variety of colours and coat lengths and textures. Are they crosses? To be honest every breed is a result of a crossing of breeds going right back to the wolf and then to a time when man discovered that to breed crosses correctly gave him a working companion. But once the line being bred has reached its optimum then it's the time to stop and appreciate the quality, because to carry on mixing can introduce faults. Rather like a Christmas cake it doesn't matter who originally decided what the recipe should be like it is now generally accepted that a Christmas cake has fruit, nuts, cherries, marzipan and icing. The recipe can be adjusted slightly, cherries can be left out if not liked but the rest of the fruit weight must be adjusted. Nuts can be left out but there still needs to be an adjustment to the recipe. If adjustments aren't made the recipe becomes unbalanced and the cake can crumble, if too much is altered the cake ceases to be a Christmas cake!

The foundation for our beloved Border Collies has been developed over hundreds of years and in the last two hundred years it has become the ultimate working companion – the best of the best.

**Barbara Sykes**



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