



THE WORKING KELPIE COUNCIL OF AUST INC.

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Kelpies Respond To Body Language

Article about Late Jack Body breeder of the well known and very successful Glenlogie strain dogs
(Reprint from January 1990 Bulletin)

If anybody knows how to speak to a Kelpie, Holbrook's Jack Body does, it is the language of 70 years of handling some of the best sheep dogs in the country ... soft, warm and exact.

Dog height, down on one knee he stretches his hand out and calls quietly, 'come, come'. 'I like to talk to my dogs,' he says. 'I want him to come a little bit at a time. If I say to a dog 'come here', I want him here and he has to be here now; not tomorrow. 'If you ask him to come six inches, you don't want six feet'. Jack Body has had dogs since he first started working on stations at the age of 11 in 1920. It was a matter of necessity, he says.

'I've just gone 80 years and I've always had good dogs. And I've always had a crook arm, so my dogs had to be better than the other blokes' dogs to get the jobs.'

Only once was he really at loss for a dog, Working on Kinross Station at Holbrook, young Jack was penning up for 16 shearers in a shed where 186 sheep a day was dragging the chain. With the wool flying off the wethers and without a decent dog, Jack was in the firing line from a shearer who was held up for sheep. It was the last time Jack didn't have a top dog. He promptly bought a rough haired red Kelpie appropriately called Ruff for a pound from Kinross boundary rider, Les Anderson, and the situation abruptly changed. Only 12 months old, Ruff showed his form and the same shearer had to lift his first sheep over the door as they were packed in so tightly.

From then on through the 1930's, Jack broke in, trained and sold dogs through a variety of jobs including boundary riding on Wyanawah station at Holbrook. By the 1950's Jack was working in town and it wasn't until the early 1970's that he showed his true form as a sheepdog trials man.

With a few acres and fewer sheep to train the Kelpies from his Glenlogie stud on, Jack set out to take on the world. The sport has taken him through every state in Australia except Western Australia, twice to Tasmania and twice to New Zealand.

It was across the Tasman where he met with his greatest triumph with his best trials dog, Glenlogie Rex. He was placed 11th in the world in the big Rotorua Expo International Sheep Dog Trial in 1978. Rex, he says, was the most intelligent dog Jack owned and was placed 40 times in trials, going on to sire numbers of top trial dogs. Glenlogie Mandy, by Rex, was Australian Champion with Jack at Mudgee.

Among the best Tex sired is Glenlogie Lucky owned by Chris Stapleton of Oberon who was the current National Kelpie champion, twice Australian Yard Dog Champion and twice NSW Yard Dog Champion. All in spite of the fact that Jack is not a yard dog fan.

But, Jack says, it does not matter how good or well bred a dog is, they have to be trained. 'A dog is only as good as the bloke that owns it and if the man's no good, the dog's no good.'

And how does he choose a top dog? 'In a pup, you don't,' Jack says. 'Anybody that says they can pick a pup at four, five, six months of age; nope, they're having themselves on. 'But as a general rule I like a good wide head that shows brain capacity. 'If you are breeding cattle you are breeding for beef, if you are breeding sheep you are breeding for wool or mutton and if you are breeding dogs, you are breeding for brains. But he's got to be working for you; he could have his brains working against you.'

But the people in the Know say Jack Body's dogs always work with him and it shows in his natural love of a great working dog. 'I've always had a dog, penning up, working on stations -- even if I wasn't competing, I'd still have a sheepdog -- they're wonderful mates.