

**Growing up in Rough Collies** by Josh Blackburn

Rough Collies, a breed which has beautiful qualities both in appearance and in character. My Grandma (Duna Jones) established the Erjon kennel in 1961 so dogs have been a huge part of my family life and I have found within myself a great love for the breed. Rough Collies are the most gentle, loyal and caring dogs, as a child I remember sitting within the gardens talking to them, rolling around and playing on the lawn with them or just sitting and cuddling them for hours.



I have attended dog shows from being a child, but it was not until 2006 that I started to really gain an insight into what goes on inside and outside of the ring. I used to spend time watching everyone groom their dogs all different ways and learn new ways to present our dogs to the best of my ability and sit and listen to people talking about breeding practices.

I've had some great times with some very special people.

Since passing my driving test, I am now designated driver and Grandma is now designated red wine drinker! This being the case it provides more entertainment during the show and a quitter drive home!



In the Summer of 2006, I handled my first ever Rough Collie in the ring at Leeds Championship Show and since then I have learnt more about the breed and attended a collection of seminars. I gained a separate interest in the Erjon Kennel and I am very lucky to have been supported by many people within the breed, especially my mentor Mr Derek Smith who has supported me for many years. It is an honour to have him as my mentor and friend.

In 2013 I started my judging career and I have judged within the UK and once in Ireland. In February 2021 I received notification that I have been passed to award C.C's in my beloved breed. A true honour and a childhood dream, one which I always wanted to achieve. I couldn't imagine a life without Rough Collies and the wonderful people I have met. I hope that one day my children will follow on and enjoy it as much as I have so far.

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