

D.D Jones and Sons, Incorporating Cornish Country Carriages

“Be keen and work hard. Stick with it”

Introduction

D. D. Jones and Sons are a family business, established in 1979 and based in South West Cornwall. They have range of carriages and vintage vehicles to cater for all occasions including weddings, funerals, vintage car hire, film and promotional work, horse ploughing and working demonstrations, live horse shoeing demonstrations, complete with Victorian forge and associated equipment.

David Jones, the business owner, is a qualified farrier and as well as his other business interests, he still finds time to shoe customer’s horses with his Apprentice Jack Eddy.

In this Spotlight we talk to Jack who is part-way through his 4-year Farrier Apprenticeship and spends his week working between David Jones and Arthur Bell, another local Cornish farrier.

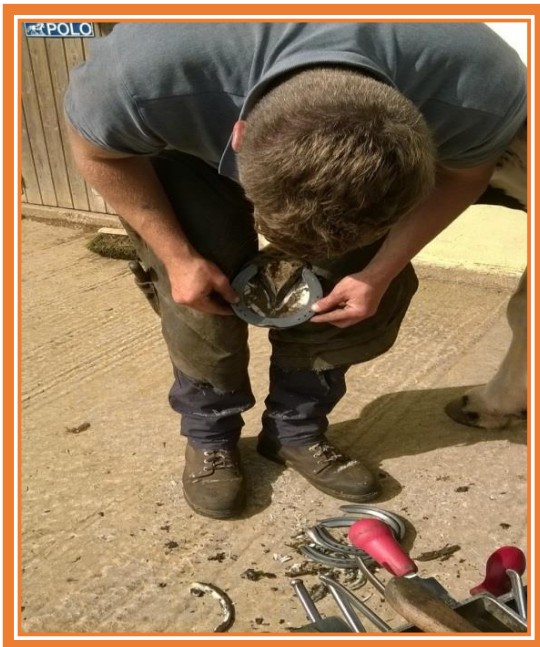


Image: Jack Eddy, Apprentice – D.D Jones and Sons

How did you get started in your career?

I’ve always had a family background in horses and after doing a sports course at College I wasn’t sure what to do next - my girlfriend, Amy (David Jones’ daughter), introduced me to David. He agreed to take me on as his Apprentice.

Can you outline a typical work day?

Well during the Summer I start work between 7.30am-8am and travel to customer’s yards throughout West Cornwall, shoeing and trimming their horses’ feet with our mobile forge. During the winter, the hours of work differ due to the darker mornings and evenings and we tend to shoe fewer horses.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Meeting customers and taking pride in the quality of my work, ensuring that the horses are safely and professionally shod for a variety of disciplines. It’s generally a relaxed rural job and I get to take my dog to work with me.

What skills are important for anyone wishing to start in your profession?

In Great Britain the approved route to becoming a qualified farrier is by undertaking an Advanced Apprenticeship, whilst being employed by an Approved Training Farrier. The Apprenticeship takes a total of 4 years to complete and individuals must be qualified to be able to legally practice as a farrier. Whilst working and training on the job, I also attend periods of block release training with Herefordshire and Ludlow College. The Apprenticeship does have entry requirements, so it is important to have at least 5 good GCSE’s and a Certificate in Forgework. Farriery, is a science and an art, so an interest in these is also useful as well as a good eye for your work.

What main personal attributes do you think is important for your type of job?

A good work ethic. You also need to be polite and have a sense of humour. As the work can be strenuous and hard you also need to a good level of physical fitness and dexterity. Good communication skills and the ability to be able to use different language when speaking to e.g. customers and vets.

Do you have any tips or suggestions on how young people and adults can enter your industry?

The only route to becoming a farrier is to undertake an Apprenticeship with an Approved Training Farrier (ATF). You can search for Approved Training Farriers on the Farriers Registration Council's website and find links to the 3 Colleges in the Country that offer the Apprenticeship.

You can ask your local farrier if he or she would be willing to take you on for a period of work experience, this will help you decide if you'd enjoy the work. If you wish to undertake the Apprenticeship I'd strongly recommend taking the time and effort to send a hand-written letter to an ATF. They generally receive many enquiries from young people looking for an Apprenticeship and can easily tell if you have written the same letter using a computer and sent it to numerous farriers!

What career progression opportunities are available in your business/sector?

Farriers are required to continue with their own professional development. The WCF Diploma in Farriery is the examination taken at the end of a four year apprenticeship, after which Farriers can undertake the Associateship examination which concentrates on therapeutic shoeing and remedial farriery. The Fellowship is then the highest level of technical competence.

Once qualified and registered, farriers can legally work and often progress to setting up their own 'rounds' or businesses and are then self-employed. Some farriers go on to work in top yards including racing yards or may even be employed working with horses in the forces.

Why is it important for your sector to attract and train young people and new entrants?

New entrants will always be required to replace those leaving due to ill health or retirement. Generally, horse ownership has increased over the years and therefore there are more horses requiring shoeing and trimming. New entrants are trained in the latest techniques and technologies, so it also helps to ensure the profession is modernising and progressing.

What trends do you predict for your industry within the next 10 years? E.g. is it a growing market requiring more young entrants

Standards will continue to improve, but whilst the basic shoeing practice hasn't changed for hundreds of years our profession keeps evolving.

General words of wisdom

Be keen and work hard. Stick with it, whilst it is a 4 year Apprenticeship in my experience it is worth it in the long run. Be prepared to spend periods of time at College, away from home. Also be prepared to be on a minimal Apprentice wage whilst training.

Further contact/information

For further information on Jack's employer, D. D. Jones and Sons, visit their website <http://www.cornishcountrycarriages.com/>