

IDEAL TYPE

Attending the Sheltie Conference 2000 in the U.K. was both educational and thought provoking. In fact, over six months later I still find myself thinking about the event and some of the things that were said and about other things that impressed me without being spoken. There is no doubt that it was the largest gathering ever of really experienced, committed Sheltie breeders. I, and many of those who later contacted me, only wished there had been more time for some real indepth discussion about our breed. With increased communication comes the possibility of greater understanding, and if not agreement, hopefully more tolerance for the views of others.

While preparing for the Conference I called upon our ASSA Historian to provide material that would better enable me to serve as delegate. Fortunately for all of us, Mary Van Wagenen and Evelyn Davis of Sea Isle Shelties, kept literally everything for posterity. In my studies I came across a correspondence file with letters from the U.K., Europe and Australia written by Clara Bowring, Dr. Todd, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Pierce, the Rogers, the Herberts, Olwen Gwen Jones, Mary Davis and many others. There was a wealth of information thus contained and it was apparent that although there wasn't always total agreement on issues there were strong friendships between Sheltie breeders worldwide. With the passage of time and the rapid turnover of fanciers today there are fewer and fewer veteran breeders who have withstood the tests of time and I feel these are the breeders to whom we should listen.

It was with these thoughts in mind that I have undertaken the project of forming a panel of experienced, successful, long term breeders from around the world.

Each was informed that we may find that we have a lot in common but also it may be our differences that get us all thinking. Each participant was requested to create a short biography and answer the question that follows this introduction. Please bear in mind that the responses reflect over four hundred years of combined experience with the Shetland Sheepdog !

Sincere thanks to each who agreed to participate for the benefit of all. I must also personally thank Roy Pearson for helping to keep the project moving and Onnaka Dudley for her typing skills.

Tom Coen May 2001

Question: "While our standards contain absolutes such as tail length, dentition and certain structural requirements there are areas that leave some room for individual interpretation. Over the years of involvement a mental picture develops for each of us In regard to our visualization of the standard. Using words please paint for us as detailed as possible picture of your ideal Sheltie according to the Standard."

Painting a Mental Picture of My Ideal Sheltie

At first glance, my ideal Shetland Sheepdog must instantly appear as a small, attractive, longhaired sheepdog of working shape with flowing lines and graceful movement, of colours and markings according to the Kennel Club Breed Standard. I look for an overall impression of nobility.

Head must be refined and balanced into a smoothly moulded blunt wedge. A flat skull with a slight stop and a rounded muzzle with tight lips must profile parallel planes. The almond shaped and obliquely set eyes giving an inquisitive look. Natural well carried and placed ears with tips gently folded over. All these details play such a vital part in producing the sweet expression, mixed with substance but without the slightest hint of coarseness.

Bone structure should be strong but never heavy. Well angulated fore and rear quarters must give freedom of movement with reach and drive into a floating, daisy-cutting action. Oval feet important.

To me the typical Sheltie must also have the characteristic sweep over the loin and a correctly carried well feathered tail which never comes over the level of the back when on the move. All crowned by a well fitting coat and furnishings.

Finally, I wish my ideal Shetland Sheepdog to have that typical temperament of being very affectionate, gentle and polite, willing to please, a quick learner and interested in his surroundings.

I couldn't think of a nicer constant companion!

Madeleine Lund, Starbelle Shelties, Sweden:

- Bred Shelties since 1970, produced among others, six generations of Champion bitches
- Small kennel of 7 dogs, all living as family pets, 2-3 litters/year.
- On the Swedish Breed Club Committee at several occasions, today Honorary Member.
- Partly responsible for the Swedish Club Archives. -Judged Open Shows in Sweden and England.
- Author of a Sheltie Pet Owners Guidebook, The Swedish Standard Elaboration and many Swedish articles on Breed History, Standard Interpretation, English Dog Shows, etc.
- Recorded 2 homemade amateur videos on Head and Expression, Construction and Movement.
- Delegate at Swedish and Norwegian Breed Seminars (lectures, hands-on, etc.)

"That almost indefinable look of sweet, alert, gentle intelligence". No longer written into the standard, but those words encapsulate what I look for in a Sheltie. I want a Sheltie which stands proudly, one which fills my eye with a pleasing body balance, definitely not in any way square; a topline which begins with a length of neck which shows the correct arch and continues through to a graceful sweep over the croup and a well set tail. An elegant dog. Stuffy necks and high set tails just do not go with a Sheltie of quality.

I'm not that fussed about colour and markings, though admit that a full white collar can be an asset. Coat should be of correct texture and sufficient to display the Sheltie as a dog of great beauty, but not so much that outline is obscured. As I have already said, outline/"shape" are very important in depicting a great

Sheltie. As long as size remains within the one inch tolerance, I am tolerant, and would never penalize a dog of 15 1/2 inches nor a bitch of 15 inches.--nor the one inch lower than ideal, though that is unusual.

Whilst shape is what is first seen and most noticable from afar, my ideal Sheltie should have a beautiful head, with correct planes and soft, dark almond eye.

Ears seem so much better these days that they are not a serious problem, but correct set and tip complement a good head. Ears breaking more than the top third detract from the correct expression, so too do ears which are set too high, these are a good fault in as much as they pass well in the showing, but they should not be seen as correct. Definitely no round eyes and definitely not a sharp, hard expression. I want to look at him or her, and feel we love each other.

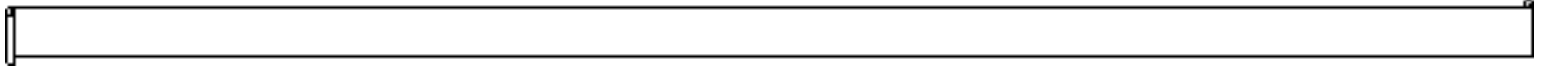
The number of Shelties which move like a dream are few and far between-; they glide with such effortless movement, whether it be at a slow walk or a fast trot, and it is a pleasure to behold. I value excellent movement very highly -but not enough to forgive lack of type in head.

Finally, character- personality -that little bit extra which sets a dog apart; and whilst our standard calls for a reserved temperament, I can easily forgive one which welcomes our visitors. Above all, I like a fun dog, dependable with intelligence and a free spirit wonderfully depicted in the opening minutes of the English video where such a large group of Shelties, many shapes and colours, careened down the hill, having the time of their lives.

Barbara Phillips

Barbara Phillips' involvement in breeding and exhibiting Shelties in Australia spans forty years with seventy Sheltie champions carrying the Nigma kennel name. She has served on the SSC Victoria Executive for 20 years, the last five as president, before retiring to the country to farm Angus cattle with her husband Geoff. For the past 10 years, Barbara has served as Secretary of the

National S.S. Council. Barbara has judged Sheltie Championship shows in Australia, New Zealand and Scandinavia. She also held a championship judging license for Working dogs and Hounds until she relinquished all but Shelties last year.



My ideal Sheltie always appears in the late afternoon light, that golden light that softens everything and gives it almost a "glow" from within. He, and we'll use the masculine form only for the purposes of this description as there is no preference on my part, is standing in a field of green and I am immediately struck by his beauty. He is regal and proud with great symmetry and balance...elegant balance...not stuffy or cloddy in any sense. He is, however, sturdy of build with well furred legs that provide a sound foundation for his athletic body. He sees something in the distance and draws himself up, exhibiting reach and poll of neck. I notice that his head is well above the level of his back and well forward of his front legs, indicating a well angled front. The graceful curves of his arched neck, which fits smoothly into his back, gradually sloping croup, and well bent stifle create flowing lines that are pleasing to the eye. There is nothing square or short legged about this picture that would spoil the overall impression of elegance. I notice that this dog is not long in the underline and the distance between his front and rear legs is relatively short, a sign of correct angulation and length of back and loin. The tail completes the flow of this picture and I see the hair on it actually touches the grass, indicating good length of the vertebrae. The crowning glory is a profuse, harsh double coat, rich in color, that fits the dog and further enhances his outline.

As he comes closer I observe the clean lines to his head. It appears to taper only slightly in profile and from the front. The planes are well defined and the stop is the balance point between the muzzle and skull, which are of equal length. The head is inclined to lightness but it is completely finished, detailed, refined and one piece. The top skull is flat over the eyes and is "up" all the way back to the occiput. The sides of the skull are also flat with no prominence to the bones on the sides of the head., thus creating the desired "cornering" of the skull. His eyes are set somewhat obliquely into the skull and they are almond in shape and always very dark, except in the blues. His ears are set well up on his skull with the top quarter tipping forward in tulip fashion. The underjaw, while not particularly deep, is finished out to the end, with a nice "chin" and is wide enough to accommodate a full complement of evenly spaced teeth that meet in a scissors bite. The lips are straight and tight and contribute to the illusion of "smiling" when the mouth is open. This construction of the head along with the eyes, ears and soul of this dog give it a soft, intelligent, alert, and inquisitive expression -a true reflection of his inner nature and character and one of the most important elements of his breed.

As he begins to move I'm immediately impressed by how agile he is. He drives with his rear and his front feet are barely lifted above the ground as he reaches forward. I notice that he reaches past his nose with his front feet when in a fast trot and his back is very "quiet", appearing as if you could place a glass of water on it and it wouldn't spill. It all seems so smooth and effortless-almost as if he could go all day.

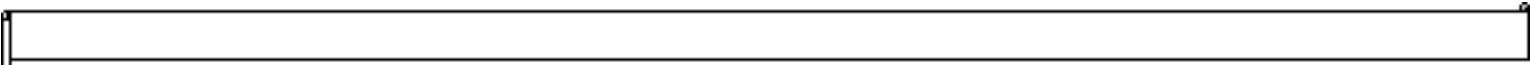
The sun is beginning to go down and I realize it's time to call it a day. I turn around to collect my perfect dog but he has suddenly vanished ...I guess I shouldn't be surprised as I've been pursuing him for thirty five years and he has always managed to elude me.

Tom Coen

Tom Coen established the Macdega prefix in the early sixties. He and his wife Nioma live in Alford, Mass., a rural town on the East Coast of the U.S., where they house about a dozen Shelties with an average of two or three litters per year. Over the past thirty-five years they have owned or bred numerous Register of Merit producers, including four of the Top 10 sires in the US, many National Specialty winners, and six All Breed Best in Show winners.

Tom served on the Board of Directors of the ASSA for more than ten years as well as National Symposium Chairman five times, and chairman of the Pictorial Standard Committee. In 1996 he became the Club's youngest life member. Most recently, he served as representative for the ASSA at Sheltie Conference 2000 in the U.K. Tom travels from coast to coast presenting his two day seminar "All In The Family: Thirty-Five Years of Breeding Shelties and The Virtue Match: A Study In Breed Type". He has also authored numerous articles on the breed, including "The Importance of the Bitch", a feature article in the 1998 ASSA Handbook.

After a thirty year career as professional handlers, Tom and Nioma retired last year and have received their provisional judging licenses for Collies and Shelties from The American Kennel Club.



Currently in my country the head of a Sheltie appears to lack uniformity, with so many interpretations of opinion of what is considered an acceptable type. However, I consider a long blunt wedge is simply nothing more nor less than a long blunt wedge that is symmetrical with the rest of the body. Furthermore, when you add to that wedge a flat skull, and the head and muzzle are separated with a slight but defined stop and on two level planes, it fills my eye. Essentially, however, the head must also have clean cheeks and a rounded strong muzzle with level lip line,

together with almond shaped medium sized eyes that are obliquely set and neat small ears.

I do not want to go into minutia, but I must include a point about expression. I find the requirement to verbally explain true Sheltie expression to be the hardest task of all to define. As humans, we each see things slightly differently and all I can say is when you actually see a divine melting expression, which so very few Shelties possess, there to behold is a Sheltie in all its glory .

As far as breeding is concerned, I have a clear, fixed, mental vision of what , would like to achieve and I have benefited through the years from an emphasis on Line Breeding with an occasional outcross. My criterion is for a Sheltie of "Ideal" size, weighing just short of 20 Ibs, (9 kg), moderate bone with excellent construction and movement, presenting a shape of beautiful graceful lines.

Finally, I have always thought it necessary for any working dog to project the appearance of being able to carry out that function. In my opinion therefore, an essential requirement for a Sheltie besides a long well fitted double coat, is to have a decent set of legs, pasterns and well-padded oval shaped feet. In addition, a Sheltie must have a good reach of neck, which is naturally arched and crested together with a level top line that sweeps gracefully over a rounded croup to a tail. I have always considered a full set of properly placed teeth an essential component of a Sheltie.

My pet hates are to see square shaped or over-long Shelties. In addition, are those with large forward facing round eyes, or large floppy ears or, two-piece heads with rounded skulls and deep stops. Also, those Shelties which are out of balance, together with those having short legs, certainly indicate to me that they could never fulfill their duties properly.

Just to put the icing on the cake my Sheltie would essentially have a real loveable and steady temperament to enhance my life and be a real pal.

Roy Pearson

Brief Resume of Roy Pearson of EDGLONIAN.

Although coming from a dog family it was not until 1962 we got our first pet Sheltie. The financial implications of those days prevented any thoughts of dog shows, etc. However, when this dog died and my career was improving we obtained our kennel foundation bitch through the world famous U.K. breeder Miss Felicity Rogers, which has stood the test of time developing our kennel.

Of my five children, only my daughter Deborah has maintained an interest in Shelties throughout her life and she is my active partner with our dogs. Both Deborah and I are Championship Show Judges and Deborah judges quite alot both at home and abroad. She is the youngest person in the

breed to judge a Sheltie Championship Show in the U.K. Her next prestigious appointment overseas is to judge the Australian Sheltie National Championship Show. We are members of all the U. K. Sheltie Clubs and we have both served on the Committee of the Mid Western S.S.C.

Over the years, my Sheltie development has been thwarted firstly by finance then by an exacting career, however, now in my retirement we have been able to emerge to the forefront of U.K. Sheltie activity. Although we only keep a small number of dogs, currently seven are home bred Champions. Of our many high level awards, I would highlight just two, being Best of Breed at the 75th Anniversary Championship Show of the English S.S.C. also, being Best of Breed at Crufts in 2000. In addition, for the past three years we have won the prestigious U.K. Top Brood Bitch awards with three different bitches. In addition, we have been the winners of the U.K. Top Breeders Competition, also for the past three years, having consistently been the top-winning kennels with various dogs.

I have always been ambitious and hopes and dreams have been my way of life, but should the day arrive when I feel content with my level of achievement in our hobby that will be the day I pack up.

My mental picture of an ideal Sheltie is one of an esthetically pleasing, balanced and functional little dog, elegant and memorable, never common. His outline is a series of gentle curves, each flowing into the next to become part of the whole.

His neck is long enough to hold his head well above his back and forward of his front legs, then blend smoothly into his back, ending in a gentle sloping croup with the tail set on low enough so as not to spoil the gentle curve.

He has enough bone and substance to appear sturdy, but never cloddy. He must be lithe and agile, capable of covering ground effortlessly on any terrain. This, along with his intelligence and trainability, is what makes him such a success in the performance events.

The moderately profuse coat is not so abundant as to obscure the outline of the dog but, rather, is profuse enough to enhance his beauty. Essentially "wash and wear", the undercoat should insulate and give lift to the coat, while the outer coat should be coarse enough to protect him and resist matting in any weather.

The Sheltie is an athlete and his body must reflect this. He will have some fore chest and an oval shaped rib cage with depth of brisket to allow plenty of room for heart and lungs. His correctly shaped rib cage will allow the well angulated shoulders to lay back so that there is only a slight separation at the withers and

the upper arms and front legs will move unrestricted over the narrower bottom of the rib cage. The shoulders, ribs and thighs, not the loin, account for his slightly longer than tall appearance.

As important as his body is, the head, in my opinion, defines the Sheltie, making him unique and unmistakable, even when compared to his cousin the Collie. Muzzle and skull blend together so smoothly that they appear as one piece, a blunt, gentle wedge as seen from either front or side. The planes of the head are parallel divided by a small well-placed stop. The bones of the skull should feel flat rather than rounded. The almond shaped eyes, neither too large nor too small, are set obliquely, but not so much as to replace the sweet expression with a crafty one. Dark pigment around the eyes and lips, and a black nose enhance the picture so that, with the high set ears breaking straight forward, we have the essence of the breed, alert, sweet, and intelligent.

Mildred Nicoll

Mildred Nicoll has owned, exhibited and bred Shelties for over fifty years under the kennel name Birch Hollow. As a professional handler during the '60's and '70's, she handled many Sporting, Hound and Working (Herding) breeds, including the Pixie Dell Shelties. She co-bred the 1977 ASSA Best in Futurity. Birch Hollow dogs have been ASSA Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex, as well as All Breed Best in Shows. One became the first bitch in the Century Club (100 Best of Breeds).

Mildred has been judging Shelties since 1989 and judged the ASSA Futurity in 1989 and the National Specialty in 1995.

She served as ASSA Director At Large from 1987 -90 and President from 1990-91 and is a Life Member of the ASSA

Painting a Picture of my Ideal Sheltie

My ideal Sheltie would have a working shape, an arched neck that would hold the head proudly. The head would be refined, a blunt wedge tapering from ear to nose. The skull would be flat, the cheeks merging smoothly into a well-rounded muzzle. Skull and muzzle of my ideal Sheltie would be of equal length with a very slight but definite stop. The eyes would be dark and of perfect shape, they would have that far-away look which is so hard to find. The ears would be placed close together on top of the head with that alert look they have, asking, "what would you like me to do?" The jaws would be level with a well developed underjaw, not too heavy. The head would be refined, finished off with a full complement of teeth. The shoulders would be well laid back, the blades sloping outwards with a good spring of rib. The shoulder joints would be angled, the forelegs would be straight, muscular, and 91ean ang the pasterns would belong

to a working dog. The body would be slightly longer from a point of shoulder to bottom of croup. The chest would be deep, reaching to point of elbow. The ribs would be well sprung, a lovely level back with a graceful sweep over the loins.

The hindquarters would be muscular with a well bent stifle and the hocks clean with good bone, but not over heavy. The hocks would be straight when viewed from the back. My ideal Sheltie's tail would be set low with the bone reaching beyond the hock with a lovely upward swirl. It would never have a gay tail, my ideal Sheltie.

The movements of my ideal would be smooth and graceful, lots of drive from the hindquarters and long stride from the front with daisy cutting action covering a lot of ground with little effort. The coat would be double, the topcoat harsh to touch, the mane and frills would be abundant. I have no preference what color my ideal Sheltie would be, but a lovely shawl white collar, white legs, white socks on the back legs and a lovely white tip to the tail. If he was merle, he would be a beautiful silver-blue and well broken. Intelligent, always knowing what I am thinking and I knowing what he is thinking. Of course, all of this topped off by having perfect size. Does anyone know where I can buy such a dog?

Joyce Miles of Milesand (formerly Milesend)

Bred Rough Collies from 1968 then Shelties from 1974. Have produced champion dogs and bitches. My dogs have had B of B at Crufts and B.I.S. at most of the breed club Championship Shows in the U.K. Kennel of about 12 dogs, half male and half female. My dogs have won top Stud Dog awards and my bitches progeny awards. Host on the judging scheme for the English and Mid Western Schemes and have been a committee member of a branch of the ESSC. My judging experience-have judged Championship shows in the U.K., Sweden, Germany, Finland, Denmark and Holland.

My ideal Shetland Sheepdog is one of sound construction, with strong, rounded bone, a healthy vigorous dog, and all this in a frame no taller than 14 1/2" for dogs and 14" for bitches.

The head should be a refined wedge, with a flat skull, a definite stop and a well filled rounded muzzle. The chin should be strong and the lips should meet when the mouth is closed. I am looking for a dark expressive eye, almond in shape and set obliquely. Except in merles, the eyes should be dark and I am

definitely looking for that alert, yet gentle expression. Ears, both the set and carriage are very important. Heavy, or sideset ears give a look of lack of quality. If the ears are well placed and carried up on the head, carried semi erect with the tips facing forward, then the expression is enhanced. The teeth should be complete, the incisors level and in a scissor bite. The neck is of sufficient length to carry the head proudly, well muscled and arched. A short neck ruins the outline and takes away that impact of quality. The front legs should be parallel when viewed from the front, when viewed from the side the front legs should be under the withers - the angulation of the forearm and shoulder should be such that they are of equal length, thus making sure that they are a support of the body. The width should be sufficient to allow complete freedom of front gait. The topline should be level and end in a graceful sweep over the croup. The depth of brisket should come down to the elbow, at least in an adult dog. The hindquarters should be well angulated, with a well bent stifle and low, sturdy hocks. The tail should be low set and carried low, even on the move, at least no higher than the level of the back.

The overall picture of the ideal sheltie should be marginally longer in body than the height is the withers. Any exaggeration to the length of body takes away the whole balance of the dog, and the other extreme of too short a back gives a "spitz" look and must be heavily penalized.

The coat is very special -straight and harsh in texture, with a soft undercoat, giving an appearance of abundance. The three recognized colors are sable, this ranging from clear gold through to dark shaded, tricolour, where the black is a good rich tone, free from rustiness, and the tan a good rich hue. Black and white is also a recognized color and apart from a lack of tan the same remarks apply. Blue merles should be a clear silvery blue, with a well broken splashing of black to resemble marbling. Some blue merles are devoid of tan, but where tan is present it must be rich in hue. Whatever the color, the white markings are allowed only as a blaze, collar, chest, legs and tail tips.

Movement makes or mars the ideal Sheltie -a long easy stride is the ideal where the dog has long, low front extension and a positive drive from the rear. Any jerky gait, plaiting or weaving is a hideous fault. The whole gait is effortless, with the dog taking a long stride, covering the maximum amount of ground with the minimum amount of effort. Temperament is a very important point, the sheltie should not be hyper, but loving to its owner, tolerant of strangers. In the showing they should be responsive and alert, not nervous and never cringing.

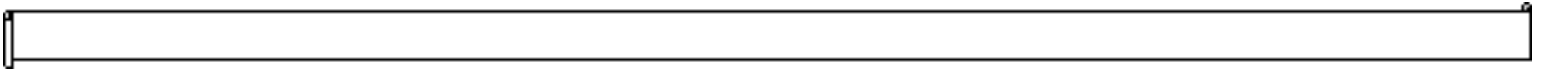
Margaret Norman

The kennel name of Francehill is fifty years old in June, 2002. I met and fell in love with Shelties when I was eight years old, and had my first sheltie at this age. I showed him at our local show, Camberley, Surrey and won a second prize -this seemed to cement what was to be a life long interest. My first homebred champion was CH Francehill Glamorous, although I had handled a bitch to her title prior to this. I do like to keep the numbers to a small "family" size, but despite less stock, I have produced more champions than

any other present day kennel.

Many modern kennels actually started with Francehill stock, which is gratifying. For many years I was the youngest person to have awarded CC's in the breed - though Debbie Pearson has now topped this! I have produced champions in all three main colors. I am on the Kennel Club's list of top judges in the breed - actually standing at No.2, behind Olwen Gwynne-Jones. I have judged in many countries round the world, and have written a book on the breed - "The Complete Shetland Sheepdog".

I am very keen on the "sturdy, small, working" dog that describes our breed and am very keen that the type should be as near standardized as possible, no matter what part of the globe we live.



My picture of the ideal Shetland Sheepdog is very specific. It is also quite selfish. I derive tremendous pleasure viewing beauty, therefore, my vision involves the three views I most often have of the Sheltie.

1) I feel the overall appearance of the Sheltie when seen from a distance should be one of total symmetry .No part should stand out from the whole. My picture is of an elegant, graceful dog - sturdy, yet refined. The front legs are set well under the dog. The topline is strong with a gently sloping croup. The rear is well angulated with reasonably short hocks. The dog is moderately long with enough daylight under him to keep him in proper balance. It is important that this length come from proper angulation and not length in the loin. There is nothing long and low about my vision. There is also nothing stuffy or common about his appearance. While the legs have sufficient bone and enough coat to give them a plush look, the bone is not excessive. The feet are neither splayed nor cat feet. They are compact and oval and of a size befitting a Sheltie not a Springer Spaniel. Coat color and quantity are of little importance to me. However a richly colored, well fitting coat of the proper texture certainly adds to the picture. In addition, my ideal Sheltie possesses an inherent, charismatic presence. He has a proud, natural carriage and the ability to project his indisputable quality. I imagine this is what Albert Payson Terhune meant by the phrase "the look of eagles."

2) Watching the Shelties in the yard is one of my favorite pastimes. At play, the best of them are quick and agile. They are light enough to insure this agility. They can turn a corner and stop on a dime. They leap over one another like gazelles. It is important to me that we safeguard the refinement which allows them their grace and flexibility. A Sheltie should never be clumsy or cloddy.

When trotting in the yard, my ideal covers ground easily. He has a strong, steady topline. There is no rolling or mincing. Coming and going he is clean and true.

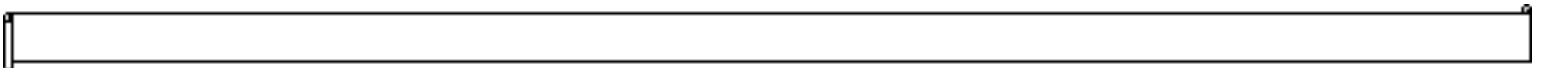
3) The head and expression are the essence of the Sheltie. Of particular importance in contributing to a quality look are a lean skull that is lacking in depth when viewed from the side, a clean, tight lipline and fill under the eyes. I believe that the proper ear begins a gentle curve inward about 2/3 of the length which results in an actual tip of about 1/4. The standard is very specific in its description of head and ear qualities. The eyes and expression are, however, more open to individual interpretation. (Keep in mind that the Pembroke Corgi standard also calls for a medium shaped almond eye.) The eye must be dark except for blue merles. I do not find blue eyes at all distracting. My interpretation of the almond probably leans toward the small side. The point of the almond is on the lower, inside corner. Narrow, dark eye rims and lush lashes add to the appearance of the eye and greatly enhance the expression. While many Shelties have pleasant enough expressions, the really great ones have expressions of such beauty that it evokes an emotional response. All that is finest in the Sheltie temperament is reflected in the eyes. Their intelligence, sensitivity and alertness in combination with correct proportions of head, ears and eye shape make for an expression that can take your breath away.

Julie Desy

Julie Desy of Ilemist Shelties has been involved with Shelties most of her life. She finished her first champion at the age of 12 and with her daughter Meredith has bred or owned over 50 champions while never housing more than a few dogs.

Julie is the past president of the Marquette and Mt. Pleasant Kennel Clubs She has served on the Boards of the American Shetland Sheepdog Association and the Shetland, Sheepdog Club of Greater Detroit.

As a handler, Julie has finished over 100 dogs for others. She has handled several Best in Show winners and many Specialty winners. She has handled dogs which have received the Pedigree Award (awarded by the Kal Kan Company to the dog who has defeated the largest number of dogs in its own breed during a calendar year) on six occasions.



My Ideal Sheltie

There he is-the third one along the line of new entries into the Open Dog class. My goodness, he is nice. Lovely size and looks so sound. Can't wait to get my hands on him.

Now he's on the table. There must be some snag I haven't noticed. All I can see is perfection, so I just stand back and gloat. Size, shape, quality, substance, symmetry-they're all obvious at a glance. Crowning a smoothly moulded wedge too gradually tapering as to appear triangular, yet too refined to be in anyway very blocky, stand a pair of sensitive ears. Sloping very slightly outwards and not so close together as to appear pert or perky. They are carried semi-erect and no, that doesn't mean that they are crisply creased across the middle to fall straight down towards the skull. In fact, their tips curve gently over, well clearing the surface of the skull. They are not inert but respond readily to any call on their attention. Below the ears, the wide twin arcs of a widows peak enhance the sweet, gentle expression of the dark, almond shaped eyes which some heavenly hand has streamlined into position, as the saying goes between the eyes, the same heavenly artist has skillfully sculptured a gentle stop which enables the foreface to lie slightly below but parallel with the outline for the skull. It is impossible to resist smoothing with one's hand the finely moulded skull, appreciating the subtle way it blends into the equally smooth rounding of the foreface.

Supporting the dog's chin on my left hand, I gently open its mouth with the other hand. Now we are in uncharted territory. Surely, fate won't have been cruel enough to have planted a shock here. A couple of misplaced canines, perhaps, or maybe three or four missing premolars. Or worse? No, all is well. With a sigh of relief I close the well-formed jaws with their neatly fitting lips, take a last look at the beautiful head in which all those component parts blend so successful, and turn my attention to his lovely reachy neck. Impressively crested, it runs down to skim across well defined withers before merging with the flowing top line, eventually following the slightly sloping croup down to a low set, low carried tail which ends with the slightest suggestion of an upwards curve.

Of course, it followed inevitably that this dog's beautiful confirmation was faultless, as was his movement. While he was gaiting a shower began. When he came to a halt, he shook himself lightly and from his beautiful harsh, deep red coat, the droplets rose, scattering into a tiny crystal cascade.

I would not need my sunglasses anymore so opened the case to put them away. How very strange. They were already there. Oh dear, I must have been using those rose tinted ones once again.

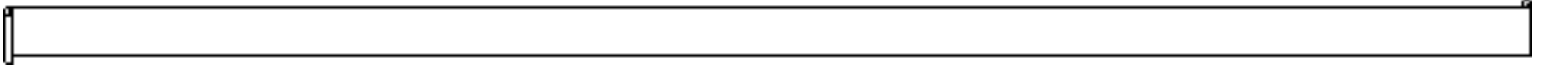
Dream on, woman.

Mary Davis

Mary Davis is mistress of the well known Monkwood Shelties, home of numerous winners of the ESSC show and Crufts as well as some very influential producers.

Mary serves as President of the English Shetland Sheepdog Club. Her judging assignments have taken her all over the world including the US where she officiated at the Colonial Shetland Sheepdog Club Specialty show.

Mary's vast experience and exceptional articles on topics relating to Shelties have established her as one of the breed's foremost authorities



A Painting of My Ideal Shetland Sheepdog

My ideal Sheltie is a breathtaking example of the breed in every respect. He is a balanced and symmetrical little working dog-one so well constructed that all parts flow smoothly one into the other. Nothing appears out of proportion to the whole. His perfectly angled front sets his front legs well under his body-and the matching rear with good bend of stifle sets the hind legs just a bit behind the ischium, with short hocks sturdily set perpendicular to the ground. He is well up on his legs, and slightly longer than he is tall. He is strongly muscled, with adequate breadth behind both front and rear legs, and his strong, tight, oval feet are set straight forward, turning neither in nor out. He is well boned and sturdy-indicating great athletic ability-but never to the point of becoming too heavy or cloddy. He has strong, but still flexible pastern, allowing for good absorption of gait shock.

My ideal Sheltie is impeccably proud in his presence. This look is accomplished by the presence of a graceful, well-arched neck, which rises smoothly out of the shoulders, both forward and upward, and of good length-enough to place the head both above and forward of the front assembly. The head is in proportion-being neither too heavy nor too light. The back is level, with a just-perceptible rise over the loin, and a graceful slope to the croup. To complete this picture, the low-set, sweeping tail, is well feathered and reaches below the hock joint. Except when the dog is "on alert", the tail remains low, and in working motions, is used rudder fashion, and never raised above the level of the back. The ribs are well-sprung, sloping gently inward toward a deep, well-developed brisket. All of this is embodied in a lustrous, well-fitted coat of correct texture and rich colors. It is abundant (less so in bitches), but not to the point of obscuring the proper outline of the whole animal.

Of great importance is the head, which is the essence of the breed, and defines type. The long, blunt wedge is clean, smooth, and refined from all angles. It must never be overly long, heavy, or coarse. The profile exhibits two parallel planes, with that of the flat top skull slightly higher due to a well-defined stop at mid-point. A strong underjaw, rounded at the chin, and clean in its line to the throat, tapers slightly to give the desired wedge shape to the profile. Lips are tight and well-fitting around a strong jaw which contains a full set of well-occluded teeth, ending in a tight scissors bite. Cheeks are smooth and clean-no puffiness-and blend imperceptibly into smooth sides of the back skull, creating an unbroken, one-piece, and gently tapered appearance from nose to ears. The ears themselves are small, set well on the head, and tipped directly forward about 2/3 of the way to the tips. The eyes are medium in size, and almond shaped, and he

look is softened by the presence of lush lashes. The set is slightly oblique, and the color is always dark, with the exception of merles, where, of course the blue is accepted. If there are brown areas, these are also dark. Expression is a culmination of all these wonderful head and ear features, as well as the soul of the dog, and evokes a blend of intelligence, questioning and love.

When he moves, my ideal Sheltie is a joy to behold. His motion is smooth, clean, agile, and effortless. It renders the feeling that this dog could go on forever. He lowers his head to gain strength and give greater action room to the shoulders. The drive is strong from the rear, with good extension of the hind legs. Matching in front, the feet extend well beyond the nose in perfect reach and drive. Coming and going, he is clean with no wasted motion, converging feet toward the central line of balance as speed increases, but never crossing over that line. His feet are lifted only enough to clear the ground comfortably, preserving energy to add to his endurance.

Last, but hardly least, my ideal Sheltie is a perfect companion. He possesses a calm, even, sensible disposition. He is highly intelligent and sensitive to his owner's feelings. I can tolerate his reserved nature much easier than I can one that is feisty, stubborn, or quarrelsome, and it saddens me that many judges will not pardon this accepted aspect of his nature. On the other hand, I do not fault the friendly, more outgoing one, so long as he falls into the sensible category.

My ideal-the perfect, all-round dog. A beautiful sight to behold, and a joy to live with.

Jean Simmonds has raised and exhibited Shelties for 50 years under the Carmylie prefix. To date, she has bred 32 American champions, 52 Canadian champions, 3 Bermuda and 4 Brazilian champions as well as owning/finishing 5 others. She has judged Collies and Shelties for 30 years, which has taken her as far afield as Australia and Japan and has judged 3 National Specialties and 2 National Host Specialties.

Jean has written innumerable articles for magazines, including the popular series "The Photo Clinic" and "The Mini-Standard". She is the author and illustrator of "The Sheltie Guide", an illustrated study of the breed standard. Jean has also painted portraits of many famous Shelties over the years.

