



• BREED FEATURE • SHETLAND SHEEPDOGS



They answered

A.1. I have been breeding Shelties for 40 years, It was a family decision as we wanted a small healthy pretty dog for the children to grow up with.

A.2. The breed is more mixed in type than 10 years ago. I don't think we have as many good specimens of the breed as we had back then. We had a stronger classes of dogs than today. One of the problems are some people



are just breeding for the next big winner rather than the next really good specimen of the breed.

A.3. 1.Sweetness of expression this is the essence of the breed.

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2. Ease of gait, minimum effort, maximum ground coverage, lithe and graceful (no high stepping or rolling gait)

3.Temperament

4.Outline, reach of neck, level topline sloping croup, low set tail.

5. Size, they are a small dog but not fine.

A.4. Shelties don't need to show ears all the time!!!

A.5. Eyes must be tested at 6/7 weeks, hips at 12 months we are lucky in our chosen breed that we have a number of DNA tests available to help us make the right choices when breeding.

A.6. Make sure you see the puppies and see the temperaments ask to see what testing has been done and make sure they are the breed you want as you still need to groom and exercise them. They are a long lived breed usually

14-16 years sometimes longer so if you choose a puppy from a reputable breeder who has had all the tests done you should have a great companion for many years.

Margaret Long Peerielee

A.1. I have been breeding for well over 40 years now and we originally chose this breed for their affinity with children, their beauty, their ability to be active and their capacity to love. I have now bred over 70 champions in many different countries, including specialty winners in Australia, Norway and Finland. I have also exhibited successfully at Crufts.

A.2. I feel the standard has deteriorated compared to then there is not the depth within the breed and with the introduction of American lines the type is now so varied. Now more importance seems to be placed on excessive grooming, showmanship, performance in the ring, promotion and advertising and less on the quality of the dog itself. I feel a lot are breeding for the generic type dog that will win in the general all breeds ring, and not necessarily adhering to the standard. Unless judges are very diligent and keep the correct English standard in mind, their winners will change the type of Sheltie that is shown. Everybody would like a winner, but the winner should be the dog that comes as close to the English standard as possible. That is self-perpetuating and the quality would then become more consistent, without the variation we see now.

A.3. Adherence to the English standard has to be paramount. This is the standard we use in this country and overseas judges should be made totally conversant with this no matter which country they come from. Emphasis should be made to them that they keep this in mind. The sweetness of expression which gives instant appeal. This is brought about by a correct head and the shape and set of the eye which should be almond shaped and obliquely set, not round and facing forward; correct ears, tipping one third and to the front, set well up on top of the head, and they should rise above the level of the skull, sitting up and over, not forward and down. Not too close together.

A balanced body with correct angles both front and back, with sound legs and good tight feet. Good bone (good referring to quality – being round not thin and flat), not heavily boned or cloddy. Elegance and fluidity of movement, where the dog covers the maximum amount of ground with the least number of steps, not being raced around with no reach and drive and the

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Q.4. If you were able to add a sentence to the Shetland Sheepdog breed standard what would it be?

Q.5. Does the Shetland Sheepdogs have any health problems?

Q.6. What would your advice be to a potential puppy buyer when looking for a Shetland Sheepdog?

legs going a million miles an hour!! Strict adherence to the maximum height would see the disappearance of oversized dogs, after all this is a serious fault.

A correctly fitted coat which



enhances the shape of the body, never scissored to shape and filled with

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grooming product to the point where it doesn't move - we are seeing so much of this in the ring nowadays. The amount of coat a dog has should not be the criteria by which Judges judge or breeders breed. These are still working dogs and their ability to do a day's work should be the priority, therefore construction should be of prime importance.

Temperament is very specific in the standard “may be reserved towards strangers, but not to the point of showing fear in the ring”. If an adult dog will not stand on the table without having to be propped up and held, then it's showing poor temperament and should be penalised. Conversely a dog that is not a 'showing fool' should not be penalised as long as the expression can be seen.

A.4. It would be “lithe and graceful, elegant and refined”. This paints a general picture of the type to be aimed for. The current preamble starts with “small long coated working dog” so unless it is read in full it gives no indication of the general type that is correct.

A.5. There seems to be pressure being brought to concentrate on those things which can be tested for, but I believe there are just as many other diseases, for which there is no testing. Epilepsy, kidney disease and pancreatitis are all life threatening conditions. I would rather have a dog with mild CEA and MDR1 and be free of serious health problems.

One issue which a lot of pet owners have is that the Shelties' very good appetite brings about obesity which in turn creates joint and heart problems.

Generally Shelties are very healthy and live to a good age, but day to day management is very important.

A.6. Visit as many breeders as possible, ask as many questions as you can think of, look at the way the puppies are being reared and don't rush into making a choice. Temperament and health of both the puppies and the parents and other dogs present will give you some idea as to how the puppies will turn out. Ask the breeder how long she has been in the breed and what her experiences have been - both good and bad. You are looking for honesty and integrity and a genuine love for the breed.

Carol Watson Tiakina

A.1. It is over 40 years now since I purchased my first Shetland Sheepdog, starting just before we left the UK. There were some super dogs around at the time. Unfortunately our first dog was one of the worst specimens I have ever seen. Although purchased as a pet the rather unscrupulous breeder

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The Breed Standard

General Appearance: Small, long haired, working dog of great beauty, free from cloddiness and coarseness, action lithe and graceful. Outline symmetrical so that no part appears out of proportion to whole. Abundant coat, mane and frill, shapeliness of head and sweetness of expression combine to present the ideal.

Characteristics: Alert, gentle, intelligent, strong and active.

Temperament: Affectionate and responsive to his owner, reserved towards strangers, never nervous.

Head And Skull: Head refined and elegant with no exaggerations: when viewed from top or side a long, blunt wedge, tapering from ear to nose. Width and depth of skull in proportion to length of skull and muzzle. Whole to be considered in connection with size of dog. Skull flat, moderately wide between ears, with no prominence of occipital bone. Cheeks flat, merging smoothly into well rounded muzzle. Skull and muzzle of equal length, dividing point inner corner of eye. Topline of skull parallel to topline of muzzle, with slight but definite stop. Nose, lips and eye rims black. The characteristic expression is obtained by the perfect balance and combination of skull and foreface, shape, colour and placement of eyes, correct position and carriage of ears.

Eyes: Medium size obliquely set, almond shape. Dark brown except in the case of merles, where one or both may be blue or blue flecked.

Ears: Small, moderately wide at base, placed fairly close together on top of skull. In repose, thrown back; when alert brought forward and carried semi-erect with tips falling forward.

Mouth: Jaws level, clean, strong with a well-developed underjaw. Lips tight. Teeth-sound with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws. A full complement of 42 properly placed teeth highly desired.

Neck: Muscular, well arched, of sufficient length to carry head proudly.

Forequarters: Shoulders very well laid back. At withers separated only by vertebrae, but blades sloping outwards to accommodate desired spring of ribs. Shoulder joint well angled. Upper arm and shoulder blade approximately equal in length. Elbow equidistant from ground and withers. Forelegs straight when viewed from front, muscular and clean with strong, but not heavy, bone. Pasterns strong and flexible.

Body: Slightly longer from point of shoulder to bottom of croup than height at withers. Chest deep, reaching to point of elbow. Ribs well sprung, tapering at lower half to allow free play of forelegs and shoulders. Back level, with

graceful sweep over loins, croup slopes gradually to rear.

Hindquarters: Thigh broad and muscular, thigh bones set into pelvis at right angles. Stifle joint has distinct angle, hock joint clean cut, angular, well let down with strong bone. Hocks straight when viewed from behind.

Feet: Oval, soles well padded, toes arched and close together.

Tail: Set low; tapering bone reaches to at least hock; with abundant hair and slight upward sweep. May be slightly raised when moving but never over level of back. Never kinked.

Gait/Movement: Lithe, smooth and graceful with drive from hindquarters, covering the maximum amount of ground with the minimum of effort. Pacing, plaiting, rolling or stiff, stilted, up and down movement highly undesirable.

Coat: Double; outer coat of long hair, harsh textured and straight. Undercoat soft, short and close. Mane and frill very abundant, forelegs well feathered. Hindlegs above hocks profusely covered with hair, below hocks fairly smooth. Face smooth. The coat should fit the body and not dominate or detract from the outline of the dog. Smooth coated specimens highly undesirable.

Colour: Sables - Clear or shaded, any colour from pale gold to deep mahogany, in its shade, rich in tone. Wolf sable and grey undesirable.

Tri-colours - intense black on body, rich tan markings preferred.

Blue Merles - clear silvery blue, splashed and marbled with black. Rich tan marking preferred but absence not penalised. Heavy black markings, slate or rust tinge in either top or undercoat highly undesirable; general effect must be blue.

Black & White and Black & Tan - are also recognised colours.

White markings may appear (except on black and tan) in blaze, collar and chest, frill, legs and tip of tail. All or some white markings are preferred (except on black and tan) but absence of these markings not to be penalised. Patches of white on body highly undesirable.

Sizes: Size Ideal height at withers:

Dogs: 37 cms (14½ ins);

Bitches: 35.5 cms (14 ins).

More than 2½ cms (1 in) above or below these heights highly undesirable.

Faults: Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

Notes: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.



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convinced me to show her. Attending my first ever show and visiting another kennel I finally realised what a Sheltie was supposed to look like!! To this day I think that is the reason I am passionate about breed type. As a dedicated breeder chasing the ever elusive "perfect dog" is what inspires me to keep breeding. Luckily my daughter Karen is dedicated to the showing/handling side so between us we have bred 30 champions, including International/Grand and dual title holders. 6 imports have been added over the years to our small kennel.

A.2. There is certainly not the depth of quality. Many are unaware the USA standard does differ from ours in Australia and due to a large influx of USA imports our type is being lost. Most

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shows see an array of different types and one can sympathize with the decision judges have to make when not familiar with the breed.

Very importantly also is movement. They are a working dog and must move with reach and drive. Too many are taking little short steps and couldn't do a day's work.. The Standard states "to cover maximum amount of ground with minimum effort"

I am a great advocate of line breeding, constantly out crossing produces a lot of inconsistencies in quality. As in



many breeds we are losing a lot of older breeders and need new people who are passionate in the "art of breeding" rather than just the showing side.

A.3. OVERALL BALANCE: correctly proportioned with reach of neck slightly longer body with a lovely sweep over croup exhibiting a low set tail.

BREED TYPE: especially the Head, is one aspects people have difficulties with. It cannot be good breed type if the head is incorrect. A cross bred could

have the correctly

Proportioned body but it would not be a good Sheltie. So judges please make sure you know your heads, it is also one of the hardest things to breed in.

MOVEMENT: reach and drive is essential with daisy cutting action..... certainly not high stepping.

TEMPERAMENT: Whilst the Standard calls for reserved this does not mean nervous. An extremely nervous dog would be incapable of doing a day's work.

CONDITION & PERFORMANCE : Now we can look at attitude, coat etc
A.4. Overall our Standard is quite explanatory. The only small addition would be to add the word soft..... "soft, sweet expression"

Many years ago they were described as having an expression so soft it would melt your heart. Although rarely seen it is something one never forgets and I do feel and incredibly important breed feature. Large round eyes in a Sheltie simply cannot be soft !!!

A.5. Pet buyers obviously want a strong healthy puppy first and foremost. One would certainly avoid any pup who was unduly nervous at 8wks. At this stage one would expect them to be reasonably

Outgoing and friendly.
A.6. Thankfully we have found them to be hardy and long lived with very few major health problems (if any).

Sue Lishman Louanda

A.1. I have been breeding Shelties for just over 36 years. Our family had always had working type dogs & one of our dogs when I was young was a Collie cross. He was the most beautiful mahogany colour & a bit smaller than a purebred Collie so after he had passed away I greatly admired Shelties & their

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size - the rest is history!

A.2. Shelties have changed dramatically in my 40 year involvement in the breed. I have seen the influence of certain stud dogs stamping excellent type on their progeny & in times when the breed had great depth of quality. Now I see the breed as very mixed in sub-types, many very average heads, poor expression & untypical movement. A Sheltie must be a working dog of great beauty, it must have a single tracking gait, minimal lift of feet with great reach & drive. Sculpting of coats

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has become too common in a feeble attempt to cut in the desired outline. I'm not sure the breed will stabilise in type anytime in the future with the rampant outcrossing with the ever increasing multitude of imported dogs as well as



those homegrown.

A.3. Judges should be very mindful of the importance of correct head type in Shelties. The breed standard goes into a lot of detail of all aspects of a Sheltie head, it is a distinguishing hallmark. Sweetness of expression can only be achieved with all parts of the head being correctly proportioned & combining harmoniously.

The outline is the next important part of a Sheltie, it must look like it is looking over a fence, not under it. The correct outline will only be achieved if the dog is sound in conformation.

Temperament should be sound. Typically, as with a number of herding dogs, Shelties are reserved towards strangers but that doesn't mean that dogs showing fear are acceptable. What it does mean is that a Sheltie should not display a Terrier-type animation. If after tabling a dog you want to re-check something you must table the dog again as many will not be accepting of an approach at ground level. You will find with the heavy bait training now, most dogs will be very outgoing, while it's appealing in the Showing it is not necessarily typical.

Movement is the next point to be mindful of. A Sheltie is a single tracking breed! All feet should converge to a centre line when moved swiftly. Double tracking should immediately let you know the dog is not correctly

constructed. High stepping, crossing, paddling, wide tracking should NEVER be tolerated.

Next, a Sheltie's crowning glory! The coat is not just to look 'pretty', it must be functional. Thick undercoat, so thick that it is difficult to see the skin is required. The top coat needs to be weather resistant & of a harsh texture. Coats that have been heavily sculpted are no longer functional & should be penalised. Only around a Sheltie's feet & ears should be trimmed - nowhere else.

A.4. I would really love to see this sentence in the current standard "The characteristic expression is obtained by the perfect balance and combination of skull and foreface, shape, colour and placement of eyes, correct position and carriage of ears." changed to what was in the pre 1987 standard "The expression, being one of the most marked characteristics of the breed, is obtained by the perfect balance and combination of skull and foreface, size, shape, colour and placement of eyes, correct position and carriage of ears, all harmoniously blended to produce that almost indefinable look of sweet, alert, gentle intelligence."

A.5. I eye test my puppies for Collie Eye Anomaly with an ophthalmologist by 8 weeks of age & then DNA test for CEA/CH, MDR1 (Ivermectin Sensitivity), DM, VWD Type III & hip x-ray adult breeding stock. It is very rare to hear of a Sheltie being severely affected by the above health problems but they are known to be present in the breed & we have a duty to not deliberately breed dogs with health problems & that is why I check all my dogs' status.

A.6. Don't rush in to buy a puppy. Shelties live to approx 15 years old so be sure you are prepared to put in the time to groom your dog & are prepared to accept a dog into the family. A Sheltie lives to please you, they need your love & attention in return. When you're sure a Sheltie is the companion for you, speak to as many breeders as possible & look at their dogs, only after that will you know the colour & type of the puppy that appeals to you.

Deirdre Crofts Deerod
