

Articles on Temperament.

Temperament of Cardigan and Pembroke Corgi

In Dog World of September 29, 1967 there was an interview conducted by Tom Horner with a panel of experts giving their views on the Cardigan Corgi. The experts were Mr J.E.J. Parkinson (Parmel); Mrs D. Albin (Hildenmanor); Miss S. Verity (Veritas); and Miss S.H. Godden (Kentwood).

Among many questions regarding the standard points Tom Horner also asked for the experts' opinion on the temperament:

Tom Horner: Nothing is said in the Standard about the temperament of the breed, how does this compare with the sharp and lively character of the Pembroke? Is the Cardigan a more staid character?

Dickie Albin – In my opinion, having bred Pembrokes and Cardigans for years my Pembrokes are complete extroverts, taking everything and everybody in their stride but the Cardigan requires a more formal introduction to people.

However, once having gained the confidence of a Cardigan you have a friend for life. They are certainly not so effusive as the Pembroke, but maybe their devotion goes deeper. I know my Cardigans would have defended me with their life. I do not know if I could say the same for the Pembroke. I feel they would be too busy showing the intruder "around the place".

Sally Verity – The temperament is entirely different. The Cardigan is wary and many people mistakenly take this as a sign of nervousness, this is not so. In its own environment the Cardigan is full of fun, energy and liveliness.

At shows he is usually on his best behaviour and appears docile. This is far from being true, he has a mind of his own and uses it.

Sonnica Godden – The Cardigan is equally as lively as the Pembroke and lacking none of the Pembroke's acuteness. He is an intelligent character anxious to be in on everything and missing nothing that goes on around him.

The Cardigan is very good natured, sensible and steady and one of the nicest dogs I have handled. He is discriminating and makes a loyal friend, is very biddable and easily trained.

J.E.J. Parkinson – The Cardigan has a temperament which is characteristic to the breed and quite different from that of the Pembroke as has been said. The Cardi is not usually the "hail fellow, well met" type but chooses his friends with a certain reserve and indeed one might say caution, in the initial stages.

Once a Cardi has made his friendship it is something which he will honour always and, while he may be somewhat indifferent to the passer by he will show unbounded enthusiasm and loyalty to those with whom he is acquainted.

KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE

by Pamela Walker, Jezalin, England.

Does 'man' keep a sufficient sense of proportion when breeding pedigree dogs?

Do we get our priorities right when planning matings, or is the aim to breed a top winner all consuming.

Do we remember all the time that **the future of the breed is in our hands - literally** and what we produce and retain for breeding will contribute to either making or marring the breed of the future.

In this I would include all breeds of dogs and not only Cardigans. Study current photographs of other breeds and see how they have altered over the years. Have they changed for better or for worse?

I think that one of the main criteria in deciding this must be how the alterations affect the well being of the dogs themselves so that we avoid exaggeration and over concentration on one particular feature and produce dogs which are both mentally and physically sound enough to live normal active lives of average length without pain or discomfort, able to cope mentally with the stresses and strains of everyday life in our modern society.

What are your first considerations when selecting breeding stock?

Do you think that a particular combination might, just might, produce me one super top winner. Yes, I know one parent is a quivering bundle of nerves which cannot even walk into the showring without trembling and backs away from anyone who tries to make friends with it, and the other parent does it's level best to fight anything on four legs, but both are good looking specimens and have done some nice wining — so lets try and see.

Have you stopped to consider what will happen to the remainder of the litter? The people who will be buying a new member of their family, the excitement of the children,

the expense to the parents, their increasing love for the charming bundle of mischief that joins their household, only to find it grow into a nervous wreck or aggressive hooligan, unreliable and a constant worry and problem until it is either put to sleep or changes home to become someone else's headache, as well as the damage that those puppies will be doing to the name of "Corgi".

Surely one of our very first considerations in our breeding plans must be to produce calm, steady, reliable temperaments that will give and get pleasure out of their lives as well as enhance the name of the breed. Make no mistake, temperament is largely inherited and although a poor temperament can possibly be improved by skilled rearing, an experienced owner, or a clever handler, the ideal temperament should be able to cope with less experienced owners without detriment.

Some years ago the Guide dogs for the Blind conducted an interesting experiment. Two bitches, one of excellent temperament and one very nervous, were mated to the same dog. The resulting litters were born close together and the puppies were divided up between the two bitches each raising half her own and half the other bitches' puppies. You might have expected that all the puppies raised by the steady bitch would grow up following her example and become calm steady adults — not a bit of it — her own puppies did but the fostered puppies had the temperament of their nervous dam. The puppies raised by the nervous bitch also followed their natural dam in temperament.

Coupled with our aim of breeding for strong temperaments, we must also bear in mind any known inherited problems our breed suffers from. We are comparatively fortunate here in Cardigans compared with other breeds, but we should take full advantage of any help available to us by way of Official Schemes and knowledgeable Veterinary advice to help us select the best for our breeding stock.

Bear in mind that many habits also seem to be inherited from the appealing and enchanting habits to the frankly irritating ones, and as we want our puppies to be acceptable not only to their new owners, but to Society in general, we should consider this as well in our selection of breeding stock. I am not suggesting that we should try to breed mindless benevolent idiots — we must certainly retain the true Cardigan character, but our puppies must have the temperament to cope with the ups and downs of everyday life as well as have the physical structure to lead a normal healthy life.

Of course we are all trying to breed dogs of the correct type which conform as closely as possible to our interpretation of the Breed Standard and which we can be proud to take into the ring, but a very high percentage of puppies we breed will become family

pets, so let us give temperament the importance it deserves and if we can also produce the top show winners in the process — then "GOOD LUCK".

Sense of humour

By Thelma Gray

In an article on "The Cardigan Welsh Corgi, A "Yard-long dog" Thelma Gray, who was breeding both Cardigans and Pembrokes, writes:

"This breed is endowed with quite extraordinary intelligence. While they are cattle dogs by design, through instinct heeling up rough steers and, if required, mountain ponies, the breed adapts itself to modern times. Cardigans love to work, and will rapidly learn obedience competition exercises, or, in the home, enjoy performing all manner of tricks both useful and amusing.

Amusing is a good word to use because the "Cardie" has a remarkable sense of humour. On the whole, I would not say that this is a marked characteristic of his Pembroke relation, and it is one thing that separates the two types. The Cardie has a real sense of fun. You can laugh at him, or with him, and he will join with you. A Pembroke Corgi can feel hurt and will slink away in high dudgeon in a situation during which a Cardigan will behave like a clown."

IS THE STANDARD WRONG?

by Patrick Ormos, Phi-Vestavia Cardigans, USA

Temperament - Even-tempered, loyal, affectionate, and adaptable. Never shy nor vicious. (AKC standard)

Temperament: Alert, intelligent, steady, not shy or aggressive (KC standard)
i will never forget seek arriving and screaming in pain appointment for weeks none of us will

It would seem that the standard is quite clear about what the Cardigan Welsh Corgi's correct temperament should be like. Yet, there are certain people who are trying to argue that Cardigans are shy and standoffish by nature. Some judges have been heard to say that one has to forgive shyness in Cardigans since that just what they're like. Where does it say that in the standard? Where does it say that about the nature of this breed anywhere in our history?

Certainly Cardigans can have problem temperaments. For some reason they seem to be very susceptible to improper socialization. A Cardigan who is not given all the

appropriate kinds of early puppy socialization, and then continued until they are over a year can very easily turn into a problem temperament. That is one of the major reasons why I do not believe in kenneling Cardigans. I don't feel that they respond well. But, to tell the truth, very few of the Herding breeds respond well to kenneling. They are for the most part people oriented breeds, which need proper socialization.

Why still everyway do we try so hard to excuse temperament problems by either re-writing the standard to suit what is in our kennel, or by passing them off as temporary. "Oh, he's just arrived and isn't used to us yet." "She's in season, she's never like this at any other time." "It's the color of your dress. He doesn't like red." (This when we're talking about dogs who are color-blind!) I've heard all kinds of excuses, and I must admit that I've made some myself. When I was breeding German Shepherds I never would have thought to make excuses for bad temperament. It was just too dangerous to have a dog that big who was unsound mentally. Somehow with a smaller breed we're just not as worried as with a big breed. This ostrich-like form of denial does not help our breed at all.

What kinds of temperament problems exist in the breed? I see dogs who are shy and end up as fear-biters, some dogs who are dog-aggressive, and many who just do not adapt well to new situations. Some of this is inherited, and some is the way the dogs are raised. Look around you in the ring. Do some stud dogs or some bitches seem to consistently produce bad temperaments? Is it just the way they are raised, or perhaps it is inherited. Do they all come from the same kennel, or out of different situations? The AKC standard asks that our dogs be adaptable. Many of them are not. They are situation secure. As long as they know where they are, and whom they are with, then they feel secure and act secure. But, put them in a new situation or with new people and they are all over the place.

Such temperaments are just plain wrong...or else the standard is wrong. Which is it? Give us your opinion.