

The Corgi Quarterly
Talks with
Margaret Douglas
SWANSEA
Jefferson, North Carolina

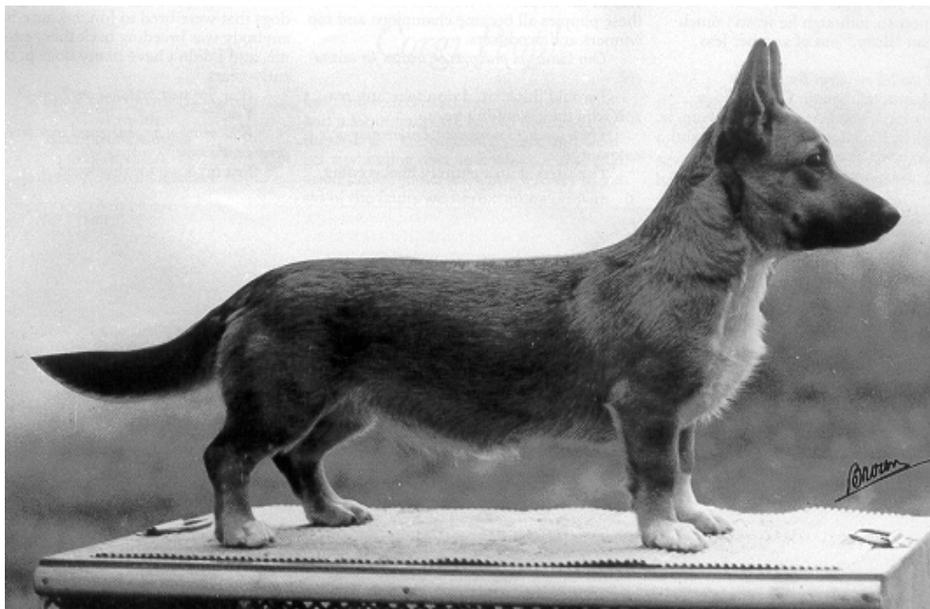
This interview was conducted at the home of Margaret Douglas in May of 1995 by Lindy Patrick.

How long have you been in dogs?

Since 1941.

How did you get your first Corgi?

I saw my first Corgi, later to be Ch. Swansea Bychan, that was owned by a Dr. Peterson in Roanoke, Virginia. I just fell in love with the dog, and the doctor was surprised I even knew she was a Welsh Corgi. He didn't know anyone who knew what the dog was. He sent the bitch with his office nurse to be bred to Mrs. Bole's Carwyn. I whelped the litter and he gave me a female puppy named "Jess". Dr. Peterson later bought Carwyn. I finished the championships on both Carwyn and Swansea Bychan. The name Swansea came from a little town, Swansea in Wales, that Dr. Peterson had visited and fell in love with. Dr. Peterson didn't become a breeder and develop a kennel name, so I did. I adopted the Swansea name and almost every dog I ever bred had the Swansea prefix.



Jess

What motivated you to start showing the dogs?

It was because I was so interested in the breed. I wanted to breed and show them, and I did.

How old were you at the time?

In my early 30s.

How many litters have you bred?

Probably 200.

How did you plan the matings?

There were no stud dogs in our area, and I had to ship my female to Mrs. Marchia Lopeman in New York state for breeding. I shipped Jess up there four different times to breed to her stud dogs. I got good dogs out of every litter. Even though Jess wasn't a shining example herself, she was a good producer. Jess went on to finish her championship, too.

Where were you at the time?

In Roanoke, Virginia.

Did you have a best litter?

I couldn't name any one litter that I thought was the best. I got at least one or two good dogs out of every litter every time I bred. That was why I was breeding, to try to get better and better dogs. I was particularly interested in sound movement. We had a lot of faults we had to breed out in those days. We'd get high tails, and we'd get a whitely once in a while, a long coat, and I had to judiciously breed to try to get rid of the faults we were coming up with. It took a good many years to do that. When we first started showing dogs, there wasn't all that much competition because there were very few people breeding and showing. Out of the first 25 champions, I bred and/or finished nineteen of them. I really went to town breeding, because I was interested in improving the breed and getting it started as well as I possibly could. Most of our original stock came from Kentwood Kennels in England. They didn't carry a whole lot of faults like we are carrying now, with bad hips and bad eyes. We didn't get that from Kentwood, and it didn't ever come from Swansea, and still isn't in the Swansea line. We have had no bad hip or bad eye problems in the entire Swansea line from its very beginnings.

How many champions have been in the litters you 've bred?

Not so many from any one litter, but I've never kept a record of the total number of champions. Out of the first 100 champions bred in America, I bred and/or finished over half of them. I bred more than all the other breeders combined, up until we had 100 champions.

What is the best dog you have owned or bred?

Ch. Lord Jim's Lucky Domino "Pup Pup." I did not breed him, but I bred his parents. He was from Ch. Swansea Punch out of Ch. Springdale Arabella, who was owned by a friend of mine who had the Springdale prefix. The reason Lord Jim's Lucky Domino ever came into the hands of Jim Churchill was because I went to look at the litter he was in, which was owned by a doctor in Washington, DC. Mrs. Killay was showing me all these gorgeous puppies, seven or eight of them, and telling me who had bought the different ones. They weren't even old enough to leave home yet. They were only eight weeks old. There was one little puppy that had a white tip on his ear. She picked him up and said, "And this poor little fellow, I suppose we can find a pet home for him somewhere." I said, "Don't you think about finding a pet home for that fellow. That's the best puppy you've got in the litter. Jim Churchill is going to be looking for a new show dog, and he'll buy that puppy." I immediately called Jim and told him there was a good puppy and he'd better get his hands on it. He took my word for it and he

didn't even see the puppy for a couple more months. Jim made him the dog he became. That litter had two or three other champions in it, but that pup was by far the outstanding one in the litter.



Ch. Lord Jim's Lucky Domino with two of his kids,
Ch. Mar Dan's Shan Pilwr of Swansea (inside) and Ch. Swansea Lord of Rhydownen (outside)

Did he have a glorious show career?

Yes, a glorious one. He won, I believe, five specialties, and his last show was when he was eleven years old.

What about his record as a sire?

As a sire, he was excellent. He didn't produce a bad puppy, no matter what he was bred to. The reason I got him in my possession was because Jim had kept a stud fee puppy, and when the puppy was about a year and a half old, the two dogs began fighting. Jim called me in California and said, "I've got to get rid of one of these dogs. Would you like to have Pup Pup?" I said, "I sure would," so he sent him to me in California, and we started using him at stud in a big way. He produced over 30 champions, most of which he produced after I got him in California. His influence on the breed is still there today.

Has he influenced Pat Santi's line?

Very much. The first show I showed him at was the Golden Gate show. Pat saw him on the bench and absolutely fell in love with him. She made an effort to find out who owned that gorgeous dog she just couldn't live without. She found out that I owned him. She was living ten miles from me then. She came around and pretty soon she was living with me and Pup Pup. That's when she started breeding Cardigans. I probably wouldn't have ever met her, and she probably wouldn't be breeding Cardigans, if she hadn't fallen in love with Pup Pup at Golden Gate. He was a charming dog, and everybody who ever saw him fell in love with him, really.

Was he your biggest winner?

I expect so, although he wasn't much bigger than "Busy," out of another Jess breeding.

Will you tell me about Busy?

Jim Churchill bought Ch. Swansea Busy from me. The first time he saw him at Westminster, he fell in love with Busy and just had to have him, so he bought him from me. Busy was a top winner from the time Jim got him and for the next six, seven or eight years. He won four specialty shows, and was the first Group winner in America.

What about the Challenge Trophy winner?

The Sweepstakes was developed by me in 1956. That was the first Puppy Sweepstakes, which I had the idea for and developed the rules for. That's the year they gave this magnificent trophy in memory of our past president, E. K. Lopeman. I won it the first year with Swansea Sheila, the second year with Swansea Bill Daughtry, and the third year with Swansea Lady In Blue. I retired the trophy. With these three wins, these puppies all became champions and top winners and producers.



Margaret Douglas with Ch. Swansea Sheila, Best Puppy in Sweepstakes at first Sweepstakes, September 1956.

Can Cardigan pedigrees be trusted for accuracy?

I would think so. I don't see any reason why they wouldn't be.

Have you used inbreeding, line breeding or outcrossing?

I've used almost entirely linebreeding, with very little inbreeding and I rarely out-crossed. I don't think you get good dogs by doing outcrosses. My idea of a good dog is a good producer, and not necessarily one that is a good show winner. The dog has to be a good producer for me to consider it a good example of the breed. That's more important than a dog that is a good

specimen of the breed that can win and win at the shows, and yet never produce anything good.

In Pup Pup you had both.

Yes, and in Ch. Swansea Jon, too, who was a good producer in his day, which was in the early '50s. There were not too many dogs that were bred to Jon, because hardly anybody was breeding back then, except me, and I didn't have many dogs in the early years.



Ch. Domino's Beau Jeste (by Lord Jim's Lucky Domino), owned and shown by Jim Churchill, ca. 1960

Was Jon your first stud dog?

Yes.

Who or what has influenced your breeding program the most?

Just my love for the breed.

You were kind of a pioneer, weren't you?

I was a pioneer, yes. I started showing when there weren't but about four or five other people showing. Then, of course, entries were small, and I had to drive to Cleveland, Ohio, New Jersey, New York and other places to get any competition at all. I drove my dogs all over for long distances when I lived in Virginia. There wasn't anybody else who would be showing, Cardigans at all.

What is the most dogs you 've ever kept?

I had 50 when Pat and I were living together in California. The Swansea Kennels contained 50 dogs for quite a spell. It was as full-time job.

Did you name your litters by any sort of a scheme?

No. I named many of my puppies after people I knew and liked. They were simple names, like Judy, Claude, Peter and Sheila.

Have you established a distinguishable line?

Definitely. It is still being carried on by Pat Santi of Rhydowen Kennels. The very same line that I established are the things she is breeding for today. She has not branched out into outcrosses, either. She has done a lot of linebreeding, which I taught her to do. She has done a little bit of outcrossing, but even then, she has stuck pretty much to the Kentwood line of dogs.

What distinguishes your line?

It's been so long since my line was being sought after, although Pat tells me she can hardly keep a litter of puppies, and she sells them as fast as they can be bred. Most people know the quality of the puppies she is breeding. They have soundness, type and good, friendly, outgoing temperaments, with no shyness.

How would you rate type, temperament and soundness in order of importance?

I would rate soundness first, type second and temperament, with all of them running pretty close to first. They have to be sound. A working dog has to be sound, move right and be constructed right. It has to have good hips, not be cowhocked, and it has to have a good front, and not be too straight in front, like a terrier. The front has to be curved around the brisket, which gives them very slightly out-turned feet. It used to be that the out-turned front feet were demanded as a characteristic of the dogs. The shoulders have to fit around the chest. One fault in Cardigans today is they are breeding in legs that drop down straight off the shoulder, with a wide, flat brisket, and the brisket is supposed to come to a point. It has always been so, but some breeders are not sticking with that rule very well. When I judged a Sweepstakes about six years ago, I found that as the prevalent fault, the wide front, the flat chest and lack of the shoulders fitting around the brisket. I found many of them that way. Outside of that, they were good dogs. But many had that front that is not in any way proper for a Cardigan.

What was your long-range goal in breeding dogs?

Pleasure, and doing what I could to improve the breed and pass it on to other people.

How would you describe your interpretation of the perfect Cardigan?

The perfect Cardigan should fit the standard today, which is not so awfully far from what the standard was years ago. We've taken out a few of the faults that are not allowed in the standard now. We tried to conform to the standard in our breeding.

Why do some dogs look good standing and posing, but not so good when moving?

Because they are not sound. A dog can stand and pose without being sound. You can fix a dog's legs and make it stand the way you want it to. You can pose them for pictures. A sound dog is one that moves and shows on its own and gaits properly.

How should a dog move from the front and from the side?

From the front, they should move straight ahead, not throwing their legs out or knocking their feet together. In side movement, I am looking for a smooth, flowing movement. The rear should move pretty much parallel. They are not a single-tracking dog.

What are you looking for in the head?

The head should have a moderate stop. It should not have a Roman nose. It should not have too long a muzzle, or too fine a muzzle, or too coarse a muzzle. It's just a medium muzzle! (laughter) That's what we've always wanted in Cardigans. Parallel planes of skull and muzzle make the right kind of head, and a pretty head.

How would you describe the ear and earset?

The ears are set fairly far apart, and pointed slightly to the front when they are alert. The ears are slightly rounded at their tips, and not pointed like the Pembrokes, and their ears are larger than a Pembroke's.

How serious are missing teeth?

It depends on what causes them to be missing. If a dog loses a tooth through an accident, that should not be held against him. That has nothing to do with the dog's breeding. If a dog is bred with crooked or missing teeth, that is something that can be passed on. It's never been a problem in my lines.

How important is eye color in the Cardigan?

Eye color is very important. The eyes must be dark. A red dog can have a little bit of an amber eye, but a tricolor, brindle or black and white dog must definitely have a dark brown eye. Blue merles can have either brown eyes or blue eyes. One brown eye and one blue eye is also perfectly permissible, and it happens sometimes. They are a little more eye appealing if both eyes are the same color, but you don't turn down an otherwise good dog just because it has one blue eye and one brown eye.

How many points would you assign to the head, if the whole dog was rated on a point scale of 100?

Probably 30.

How important is pigment, and would you breed to a dog that had any missing pigment?

It is important that a dog have full pigmentation. We don't want a butterfly nose or any white around the eyes. That's a fault one would want to stay away from, so I would not breed to a dog with any missing pigment.

Do Corgis get winter nose?

Not to my knowledge. Mine never have.

Should the chest come to or below the elbow?

I believe the standard says the chest comes a little below the elbow. That's why the elbows have to fit around that chest. It's different with a short-legged dog.

Is coat very important to winning in the ring?

Yes. It is possible, however, for a dog to have too long a coat and still be as sound as it can be in other respects. Even in the show ring, if the dog's soundness outweighs the fault of the long coat, it should win. In breeding, I found the long-coated dogs were essential in any good breeding program, in order to get the soundness of bone and the lowness to the ground and the good heads. That came with the long coats. The long coat might be the only fault a lot of them had and that's why a lot of the early champions were long-coated, including several that I showed myself. The judges had the foresight to see that a sound dog with a pretty head and type was more important than the coat being a little too long. It is easier to breed out a long coat than it is any other fault. If we could get the soundness, and all the other good things figured in, then we figured the long coat would go by the wayside, which it did.

What colors do you prefer?

I don't have a preference and they are all acceptable. I particularly like the tricolors. I also like a good brindle. Of course, I love the blue merles when they are marked properly. A proper blue merle should be a salt and pepper blue, rather than one with huge white or black patches on it. On the other hand, if a blue merle is very sound and typey, except for its markings, I wouldn't hold the markings against it. The color must be blue, not brownish merle.

Do some colors go up more often than others in the show ring?

Actually, brindles go up more often than other colors. A lot of judges have gotten the idea that the brindles have to be the best dogs, but they are not, always.

As far as an ideal front, do you want a 45-degree layback of shoulder with a corresponding lay back of upper arm?

Yes. There must be proper layback of shoulder and upper arm, and the shoulder blades must come within close proximity of each other on the dog's back. You are only supposed to get the width of two fingers between the shoulder blades. You don't want the shoulder blades sticking out and four or five inches apart, with legs that go straight off like some terriers do. The shoulder blades have to come in close at the top and then go around the brisket.

What is an ideal croup drop-off?

I don't know a percentage, but the tail should flow evenly out from a level back, and be carried pretty much on a level with the dog's body. When the dog is moving and gaiting, the tail can be carried a little higher than the body, but not be over the back.

Would you describe the correct topline?

The topline should be exactly level from the shoulders back to the set of the tail.

Is it strictly for beauty, or is it functional?

It's functional also, because a dog that has a sway back cannot have the strength it needs for proper movement, as does the dog that has a level back. It is certainly for beauty, rather than a roach or a sway back, either one. There used to be a few dogs like that, but I don't think that's much of a problem anymore.

What is the ideal height of the Cardigan?

About twelve inches from the shoulder, for both dog and bitch, but it might be a little less on a bitch and a little more on a dog.

What is an ideal Cardigan foot?

Fairly round, and no splayed toes are allowed. It's not a really round foot, like some breeds, but it is slightly oval.

Should a dog with bad feet be used?

You don't want to use bad anything, if you can help it.

What is the ideal temperament?

Friendly, outgoing and fun loving.

You touched on this, but what are the most common faults in the breed today, and also the most serious faults?

The most serious fault I found in the Sweepstakes I judged was the wide chest, the brisket, and straight legs.

Is the standard a good one?

Yes. It's fine just the way it is.

Should there be any disqualifications?

Yes. White is a disqualification, and any color other than blue merle, tricolor, black and white or brindle. Brindle can be any shade from light to dark; red brindle or black brindle, they call it. It cannot be a blue brindle. One breeder got the idea years ago that she should cross blue dogs with brindle dogs. That gives an awful color she called "ginger merle," which is a sickening color. You only cross blue merle with black or tricolor, never with the brindle. They have never crossed blue merle with brindle in England. You can occasionally breed blue merle to blue merle and not end up with too much white, or whatever, but you don't ever breed a blue merle to a red or a brindle. Breeders know that now, and it is in the standard, so it isn't permitted.

Does making the Top Ten or Twenty mean anything?

It means that you have succeeded in breeding a top-winning dog. They are not going to do that much winning unless they are top dogs. Of course, sometimes there will be one that is not really a top dog, but judges are more familiar with the breed now than they were 10 years ago, and certainly more than they were 20 or 30 years ago.

Do you think judging has improved, then?

Yes.

Would popularization help or harm the Cardigan?

It would depend on what was making it popular. If people just start breeding Cardigans without having any interest in whether they improve the breed or not, then popularity would hurt the breed. On the other hand, if people were in it to improve the breed, and to improve their own breeding, then popularity would be good. They are certainly more popular now than they were 30 years go.

Is judging fair?

Not having shown much in the last fifteen years, I don't know about right now, but it was usually pretty fair. If it isn't fair, it is usually because the judge isn't really knowledgeable about what the breed is supposed to be. I would not criticize the judging too much.

Would you rather show under an all breed judge or a breeder-judge?

I would prefer to show under an all breed judge. They know general soundness and type. They usually familiarize themselves pretty well with what type should be. They were more particular about soundness than some of the breeder-judges used to be. Some of the breeder-judges used to excuse certain faults, because that was what they bred themselves and they thought it was all right. The all-rounder is pretty particular about a dog moving really well. That's why a lot of our long-haired dogs used to win under the all-rounders, because they recognized the importance of that outside of the coat not being as desirable as it might have been. You would never get a breeder-judge to put up a dog with a coat that was a little long, even if all the dogs that were up against it had a million worse faults.

Does advertising influence judges?

Possibly, yes.

Is it ethical to retouch advertising photographs?

I don't know that that is being done much these days. I don't think photos should be retouched to an extent where it covers up the dog's faults. The dog should be shown in an advertisement the way it really looks.

Did you always show your own dogs?

Yes. I showed my own, as well as dogs I had sold to other people. A lot of the champions I finished I didn't own, and a lot of them didn't even have my kennel prefix on them.

Did you handle professionally?

I had to handle professionally, because I couldn't get Mr. Foley up north to send me premium lists in Virginia. I was driving all over the whole Eastern Seaboard to get to dog shows, all the way from New York to Florida, but he wouldn't send me a premium list because he said I was out of his territory because I lived in Virginia. I had to take out a professional handler's

license in order to get on their mailing list for a premium list. I was a professional handler for a good many years, just for that reason, so I could get the superintendent's premium list mailed to me.

Is that how you made your living?

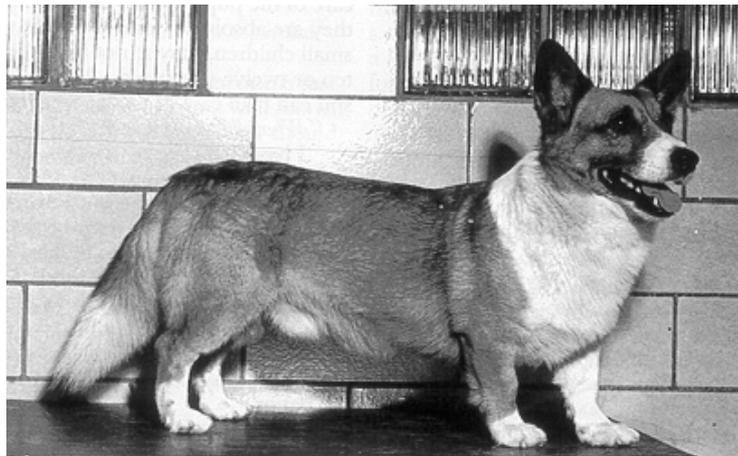
No! I didn't make much showing dogs at \$5 each, which is what I charged some of my customers. I did it just to further the breed; to make champions out of dogs I felt were worthy of being champions. I wanted to get more Cardigans out for more people to see.

Did you ever use a handler?

Very seldom.

How did you train your puppies and at what age did you start?

I trained them by living with them and playing with them. As far as obedience, I was never into that much, although I did have the first titled obedience champion in America, Ch. Swansea Jon CD. I had to get a friend in Pittsburgh to train him, and a little twelve-year-old boy to show him to his title. I was not an obedience fan! (laughter) I do like my dogs to come when I tell them to, to sit when I tell them to and to stay when I tell them to. That's about as far as I've gone with obedience, even with my show dogs. I would train them to stand and stay put for examination.



Ch. Swansea Jon, 1954

Did you attend fun matches or training classes?

Yes. I always thought fun matches were fun and good training for puppies.

Have you done any tracking with the dogs?

No. Back in my day, people weren't tracking the dogs, nor doing much in obedience, either, but just in the early stages of obedience.

Compared to other breeds, how intelligent is the Cardigan?

They are very intelligent. I used to think that was one reason they didn't do as well in obedience as some other breeds, because it takes an intelligent dog to NOT do well in

obedience. If a dog is reasonably intelligent, it will figure, "Why should I do that again? I want to do something else." A less intelligent dog will follow its trainer and do whatever the trainer wants. In watching other people's dogs in obedience, I discovered Cardigans do some thinking for themselves. A friend was showing one of my puppies in obedience and when some leaves blew across the field, the dog took off after those leaves. He thought that was more fun and made more sense than being trained in obedience. I thought that showed intelligence. (laughter)

Is it ever appropriate to take a dog anywhere off-leash?

No. You never know when the dog might see something more interesting than staying by your side. I've seen too many good dogs in other breeds that were killed because their trainers trusted them so completely. The dogs would see something across the road, run across and be killed.

Can shy or aggressive dogs be corrected by training?

I don't think so. I believe that's bred into them and you can't train it out of them. That has always been the case in my own breeding, and what I discovered from watching other people's breeding.

Does a big-name handler help a dog win?

Yes. I never had that privilege. I had to do my own winning on my own. In the first place, the big-name handler knows how to present a dog better than the average owner does. I also believe a big-name handler has some influence with the judges. I know they used to, and I think they still do. I was sometimes at a disadvantage when people with lesser quality dogs than mine had a handler on them. I had to compete with them, and sometimes I lost. It wasn't because of the quality of my dog, but because of the handling. I expect that is still going on today.

Do you have any advice for owners who would like to handle their own dogs?

I would advise them to handle their own dogs, but to learn how to do it properly first. Watch the professional handlers. Get advice from them. I did. I asked a handler one time how the rear end of a Cardigan was supposed to be, and he said, "The hocks are supposed to be straight up and down." I didn't know that the hocks weren't supposed to be on a slant. If there were things I wasn't sure about myself, I would ask a handler, and a good handler will tell an amateur.

Have you ever done any herding with your Corgis?

No. They are cattle dogs, but I never had any cattle.

Should a breed do what it was bred for?

That would be up to the owner and whether they get pleasure out of it or not. Although they were bred for herding, I don't think you will fail to get pleasure from a Cardigan just because you don't use it for herding.

Were your breedings natural or controlled?

I always assisted. One time when I shipped Jess to Mrs. Lopeman to be bred, I called her to see if she had gotten the breeding done yet, so I would know if it was time for the dog to come back. She said, "Well, I suppose so. I just put them out in the barn together. I suppose she was bred." I didn't just suppose a bitch was bred. I saw that she was bred. We used to have a lot of trouble getting them bred sometimes, and I learned a little trick. It is difficult to get two short-legged little dogs together sometimes. Someone from England was at my house while I was trying desperately to get a breeding on a bitch. She showed me how to do it. She put a stack of rugs or newspapers under the dog to bring him up to the level of the bitch, and he could get the breeding done 100 percent more easily than he could with the dog standing on the ground. That put the dog up where the bitch was, so he didn't have to put himself up at a 90-degree angle to get to her. You are never too old to learn.

What is a fair stud fee, and should it be the same for proven and unproven dogs, regardless of titles?

It's been so long since I had a breeding stud dog. We used to get maybe \$50, or a puppy. I would never give up a choice puppy from my breedings, but I would take one for the use of my stud dog.

Were your males at stud to outside bitches?

Yes, but only if I approved of the breeding, and in most cases the bitches were my own breeding, which were usually the grand-offspring of the dogs I'd sold to the people.

Why might you refuse to service a bitch?

If it was a bitch of inferior quality, from some weird breeding that I knew would not produce quality puppies, I would refuse to breed her.

Would you breed to a dog with a very serious fault if he were outstanding in other areas?

It would depend on what the fault was, and whether the dog was a known producer of puppies without that fault.

What faults would keep you from breeding to a dog?

There are a lot of faults that would keep me from breeding to a dog, such as bad hips and bad eyes.

Have you handled a lot of matings?

Probably hundreds.

Is it a good idea to breed to the top-winning dog regardless of pedigree?

Absolutely not. There have been some really top-winning dogs that never produced anything good.

How many litters should a bitch have, and what would be the youngest you would breed a bitch, and the oldest?

I bred at the second season, and it doesn't matter how old the bitch was, as long as she was healthy and breedable. The older ones could breed as well as the younger ones could, in my opinion.

Up to what age, usually?

Up to age eight.

Is there an optimum number of litters she should have?

I wouldn't say there was. I usually never bred a bitch more than once a year. I would never breed her in consecutive seasons. She needed a little rest period.

So you could get six litters out of a bitch?

Yes, at least four or five.

Did you help your bitches whelp?

Definitely. I've never had one whelp alone. Cardigans can have some problems with big puppies.

Do you supplement-feed very young puppies?

Sometimes. In the old times, I didn't know any better than to give them a bottle, usually of Pet Milk mixed with a little Karo syrup and water. Later, when it became known that you can tube-feed them, I saved many a puppy's life by tube-feeding. I raised Ch. Blue Jeans by bottle-feeding from the day she was born, which is very unusual, because they say you can't grow a good dog if you have to artificially feed it. That's what people would tell me. Blue Jeans was born in southern California at Bob Mackey's. Bob and I switched Ch. Lady in Blue around between us. It happened she was down at Bob's when she was bred to Pup Pup for a litter, and when she whelped the litter, Bob called me and Pat and told us that Lady had her puppies, but she had lost one or two of them. He said there was a gorgeous little female in the litter and Lady was going to lose it. When Pat came home from her nursing job that day, I told her about Bob's call. She said, "We're going down to get it." We drove 300 miles one way that night, after her working all day, and we picked up the puppy. We brought it back with us on a hot water bottle, and we stopped in a restaurant to warm its bottle. We drove to Santa Ana that night and back again, a 600-mile round-trip.

We kept that puppy alive with bottle-feeding, not knowing if had we been tube-feeding her we could have done much better. I got up in the middle of the night several times to give Blue Jeans her bottle. Since Pat had to work in the daytime, she wouldn't get up with the puppy. I remember she often said to me, "Don't let it die." Blue Jeans made a perfectly sound dog; absolutely the soundest dog anybody would ever want. She had no setback from having been raised on artificial feedings from the day she was born. She was a top-winning bitch for many years.

We used to be so afraid that our kennel boy, who would come in to take care of the dogs while we'd go to dog shows, would let something happen to her. We would take her with us to the dog shows and hide her under my booth. I used to sell dog supplies, and we would take Blue Jeans along with us and keep her under the booth. Some of the handlers' kids would

come by, take her out of the crate and play with her during the day. We wouldn't even trust her to the kennel boy to take care of her at home while we were gone to the dog shows. She spent all of her young life going to dog shows, but the AKC didn't know it. We kept her with us so we knew she was being fed the way we wanted her to be fed, and we knew she wasn't going to suffer with us being gone away from her.

So, AKC wouldn't let the puppy be there?

They wouldn't let a dog be on the show grounds that wasn't entered, not a puppy or anything. It was strictly against their rules. In England, they take puppies to their shows. They can take puppies to the shows to sell, or advertise them, or just anything they want to.

Do you wean the puppies yourself, or do you let the bitch do it?

A little of both. I would start supplement-feeding them at three weeks, and usually by six or eight weeks I could have the puppies completely off of their mother's milk.

At what ages did you evaluate your puppies for pet and show quality, and what were you looking for?

I started looking right when they were born, and I looked every day really good when they were about six weeks old.

Did you ever cull?

Always. I would always pick out the ones that I knew were not going to be show quality, and that I wouldn't want to keep myself or recommend anybody else showing them. I would usually pick them out when they were eight weeks old. I would sell them to somebody as long as they didn't show them. If I happened to sell one that turned out better than I thought it would, then I would show it for them.

What should a show puppy sell for?

In my day, you were lucky if you got \$50 for one. I gave many of them away because I couldn't even sell them. There wasn't any demand for them. When I quit breeding, people were getting \$100 to \$200. I don't know how much it has gone up since then.

Did you sell on terms or cash only?

Cash only.

When you sold pet puppies, did you have spay/neuter agreements?

No. I left that up to the owners who bought the puppies.

Did you get puppies back when you sold a bitch?

I don't think I did that very much. I don't think I ever had it stipulated when I sold one that I was to get a puppy back. I might have, but I don't recall it if I did.

At what age should puppies be placed in their new homes?

If it is a new home capable of taking care of the puppy, eight weeks is fine. If they are absolutely novice people who have small children, maybe not until the puppy is ten or twelve weeks old. A responsible person can take care of a puppy at eight weeks.

What did you feed your dogs?

I have fed my grown dogs, and even the dogs in other people's kennels that I have managed, nothing but Purina high protein dog food. I have done that all my life, and I still feed my half-Chow dog that. I have always fed dry dog food. I fed the puppies Purina puppy chow as soon as they were old enough to eat it.

Did you supplement?

I've always supplemented with meat for flavor.

Did you condition your dogs?

With good diet and good grooming, and they always got plenty of exercise.

When showing Cardigan Corgis, how much grooming should be done?

As much as necessary to make them look their very best. They should be clean and have good, healthy, glossy coats. I would trim the nails, and the hair around their feet. All dogs have a tendency to grow too long hair around the feet and toes. That should be tidied up. I trimmed whiskers, and I think the dewclaws should be removed. An older breeder-handler showed me how to remove my own puppies' dewclaws, and I always removed them myself as quick as they were born. I would just take my thumb nail and my finger nail, pinch it, twist and pull it out. You just pull out that little baby dewclaw, root and all, when the puppy is first born. There is very little pain. I did that almost all my years of breeding Cardigans. If you do that when they are first born, the skin is very tender, and it gets the whole root, right down to the bone, and the dewclaws never grow back.

What was your kennel setup like ?

We had a large kennel, with pens and concrete runs. We had some outside gravel pans for some to run into to help keep their feet tight. It is good for them to run on a little bit of gravel and dirt, but mostly they ran on concrete runs. In some places I lived where I had smaller kennels, the dogs were kept in runs that were covered to fresh pine shavings that were changed periodically. The best way to keep a dog really clean is to keep it on fresh pine shavings. There was no problem with them lying in their urine on the shavings, like there was on concrete.

Can adult males and females be kept together in the same run or exercise area?

Oh, yes, usually. Sometimes, but very rarely, adult males can be kept together. Usually, adult males will really tear into each other, after they get to be a couple of years old, anyway. When the younger one gets to be a couple of years old, the older one won't tolerate it. They are very competitive. Males and females can usually run together.

Where should a new breeder go to purchase his/her first pup ?

In the first place, when someone is just starting out, they should go to a well-known breeder of good quality dogs. They should ask that person's advice, and take that advice. They should improve what they are breeding, even over what they bought in the first place. The whole object of breeding is to try to get a little better all the time.

Should they go to the kennel with the big winners to purchase their pup'?

Not necessarily a kennel that has big winners, but the kennel that is producing big winners.

Can you tell us any kennels that you consider to be the best today?

Yes, Rhydowen-Swansea. (laughter) I'm prejudiced, but also watching the dogs that are being bred and seeing their pictures, I feel there is nobody outbreeding, for plain quality, Rhydowen Kennels today.

Would you recommend people join a local breed club, the national breed club, or an all-breed club?

Yes, and to get any helpful advice from whatever person they can. They should spend a longer time breeding. There are too many breeders today who have bred for only a short time, and they have a kennel name. There is a whole train of new kennel names. People will buy one puppy and put a kennel name on it. They breed a litter or two over the next five years, and then you don't hear any more about them. If they are going to drop out, most of these new breeders will drop out within five years. They are not dyed-in-the-wool breeders.

Is the parent club doing enough to educate judges and new members?

They are doing all they can. I am behind the parent club and what they are trying to do to help new members. I had finished my first four Cardigan champions before I was ever invited to join the parent club. I was a little nobody. I was not allowed to join the parent club, or even invited to join. I didn't attend picnics or anything, because I wasn't one of the club members, but I was finishing champions and doing the winning. I remember one show in Ohio where I had won with two dogs, and Mrs. Bole, the elder lady Bole, came up to me and said, "Well, it looks like I sold the wrong two dogs." I know they went to her house for a big luncheon that day, but they didn't invite me. I didn't belong to the club! I went on showing my dogs anyway, and eventually I was invited to join.

I was the treasurer for a spell, and the first treasurer who ever kept a bank account. They didn't know where the money went that was coming in for membership fees. I asked someone one time why we were always short of money and if there wasn't enough in the treasury. She said, "You wouldn't understand. There are a lot of things we have to spend money for." She'd never kept a bank account in the club's name. They voted me treasurer about that time, and I opened a bank account in the name of the Cardigan Welsh Corgi Club of America. I kept all the proceeds of the club in the account, and kept an account of where all the money was being spent. I was the first person who had ever done that. Whoever was treasurer handled the money any way they wanted to. There was no account kept that the club ever knew about. I'd say the club has come a long way.

Is there an AKC video on the Cardigan?

There probably is one now. I've been completely out of it for fifteen years or so. I don't know what all they are doing, but from what I've seen, they are doing all they can to try to educate people.

How long have you lived here?

About fourteen years. I decided in my old age I needed to come back to my roots to live, instead of staying in California where I didn't have any relatives. I was raised here in Ashe County. I lived away from here in fourteen different states and 25 different addresses for all my adult life. When I decided to retire, I wanted to leave California and come back to North Carolina.

What have you done for a living?

I sold dog supplies at the shows for at least twenty years until I retired ten years ago. What I did for a living prior to that was to manage other people's kennels a lot. I managed the big Holiday House Kennel in Pennsylvania for a good many years. Dr. Ivans had a 200-dog boarding kennel there. I also handled his Afghans for him. Then there was the Waseka Kennels in Massachusetts, owned by a big Pembroke breeder, Mrs. Powers. She bred Pembrokes, Newfoundlands and English Setters. I handled some for her, but Jane Camp (Forsyth) handled most of her dogs, but I did manage her kennels and breed some of her puppies, including English Setters, Newfoundlands and Pembrokes. Then I managed a kennel on Long Island for Mrs. Alcar who bred Welsh Terriers. I managed that kennel for a year or two.

Have you ever done any judging?

Nothing, except for some match shows. I never had an AKC license and never wanted one.

What is your educational background?

I have a high school education, and a lot of experience.

Are there any stories about some of your favorite dogs that you would like to share with us?

Two of my favorite dogs were Ch. Swansea Claude and Ch. Swansea Gordon, the dogs I won Best Brace with at Golden Gate. I had them on a circuit with me in Florida once and decided to let them go swimming out in the ocean. They were going to swim and keep on going. I couldn't swim well enough to catch them myself, but somebody else who was with me did, and had to swim out to them to get them to come back or they would have kept going. They loved water. I had another Cardigan that loved to swim and would go right into the water after anything. One time, he jumped into a pond after a duck and couldn't get back up the steep bank. He had to be helped out. They are inclined to really love the water and to swim.

When I would take him on a show trip, Pup Pup had a favorite trick. He was the only dog I ever owned that slept in bed with me. I never wanted a dog in bed with me. I wanted my own bed to myself and my dogs had their own beds. When we would go on a show circuit and would arrive at a motel, I would unlock the motel door, let Pup Pup out of the car, he would go right into the motel, get on the bed, turn the bedspread down and put himself on the pillows. He would just lie on the bed until I had all the luggage in the room. He was fixed. I have a picture of him lying on a bed at a Holiday Inn with the bedspread pushed back. He

would always push the bedspread back. He did that time and again at the motels I stayed at when I was taking him to shows. When I had more dogs and took them on trips, I would take them in crates and they stayed in the car in crates at night.

Were Claude and Gordon littermates?

Yes. They were sired by Ch. Swansea Punch out of Ch. Kentwood Dilys, a Kentwood bitch that was the grandmother of a lot of my best dogs. When I lived in California, I would walk both dogs on lead to the post office, which was about a half mile away. They learned to walk together. I hadn't even tried to start them out as a brace. I would just take them for a walk. We got to walking so well together that I decided to train them as a brace. Gordon lived at Bob Mackey's for a couple of years when I wasn't situated to keep all the dogs I had. I decided to get Gordon back just before the Golden Gate show so I could try to show him and Claude. They remembered everything they'd ever known, just as if they had been right there and trained every day. When he came back, it wasn't a week or two before I had Gordon and Claude walking every step in unison. It was like they were one dog on eight legs. Gordon didn't forget his training as a brace with Claude. Claude was the bitch.



Ch. Swansea Claude and Ch. Swansea Gordon,
Best Bracwe in Show at Golden Gate Kennel Club, 1968

In addition to taking Best Brace at the Golden Gate show, were they individually champions, as well?

Oh, yes. They made champions almost as soon as I started showing them. Claude was one of the best bitches I've ever owned, and one of the best producers. She had six litters and top dogs in every litter.

Did you have other braces before or after them?

No. That was the only brace I've ever had.

Are there any other dogs we can capture here?

I can tell you about my first good dog, Jon. He was obedience trained, even though I had to have somebody else train him. I could put him on a stay, and I could go off and hide his ball on the other side of the house, on top of the mantelpiece, or anywhere else, and I could tell him to find it and he would find it. I would hide that ball in another room, and all I would have to do is say, "Find it." He would locate that ball no matter where it was, even if he couldn't see it because it was in a dresser drawer or out of his reach somewhere. He never failed to know the odor of his ball if he was anywhere close to it.

Would he bark at it?

He would just stand there looking up at it to let me know where it was. He was the only dog I ever had that was that sensitive to his own toys. My dogs have all liked toys and I like dogs that like to play with toys. Sheila, the specialty winner, loved toys the best of any dog I ever had. She would carry her little latex shoe around. She would lie there and squeak and squeak that shoe. When I was working for the Waseka Pembroke kennel, the puppies there wouldn't play with toys. I was used to my Cardigans loving toys, but the Pembrokes didn't like toys. I couldn't even get them to play with toys. I couldn't understand whether it was the breed or whether their ancestors hadn't been taught to play with toys. Cardigans love to play. I found a big difference in the two breeds in that respect more than anything else, but the Pembroke is not as playful a dog as the Cardigan is. The Cardigan likes to have a good time! (laughter) I guess that's one reason they appealed to me so much.

Have the dogs affected your lifestyle?

They brought me in contact with a lot of good friends, people I wouldn't have missed knowing for anything in the world. I got to know them through my dogs. The friends I've made through the dogs have changed my lifestyle a lot.

Have there been any drawbacks to living a life with dogs?

Not really. I have no regrets as far as my dog breeding is concerned.

Is there anything we haven't talked about that you want to bring up?

I have no regrets, except the fact that the dogs kept me broke all the time. I was not one of the rich biddies who started breeding Cardigans, and I didn't have an unlimited amount of money to spend on them. What little I did have to spend on anything went for my dogs. I have had quite a struggle being able to support my dogs myself, and I couldn't have afforded a handler if I would have wanted one. I had to make it on my own the best way I could. My dogs always took first place with me. When I wanted to go to a dog show, I went to a dog show.

I remember I used to have to take the back seat out of the car to put in a couple of dog crates. Then I remember when I saved up mostly grocery money and was able to buy my first station wagon. In those days, when you saw a station wagon, you knew the owners were dog show people. I remember one time starting to a dog show in Maryland, and I didn't know where the show was exactly. I saw a station wagon with a dog crate in the back of it. I thought to myself, "I'll find out where the dog show is. I'll just stick with that station wagon. It will be going to the dog show." I followed that station wagon for miles right up into the man's driveway. He had just taken his dog to the vet. (laughter) You just didn't see anyone in those days with station wagons who weren't dog show people. When you would go to a dog show and look out over the parking lot, it was just a complete sea of station wagons. There was nothing but

station wagons, and never anything bigger, because there weren't any vans being made then. Then later everybody who went to dog shows started having vans. The days of the station wagons gave out to campers and vans.

Did you ever have an RV?

I had one van that was fixed up with cooking and sleeping facilities in it. I used to ride to the dog shows with my booth and dog supplies, and I cooked breakfast for some of my favorite handlers, who hadn't taken time to eat breakfast before they left their motels. There were several of them who I'd always fix bacon and eggs for on my little camper stove. I often did that. I would change vans about every two years. I used to drive 50,000 miles a year. I would average 1,000 miles a week, and in a year's time, I'd put 50,000 miles on a car.

What kind of dog supplies were you selling?

I made my own dogs leads, and still do. I have a customer in California who buys my dog leads yet. When I was in business, I made leather leads as well as nylon leads. I bought supplies to sell, everything from toe nail clippers to scissors. Anything that handlers and breeders could use with their dogs, I sold, and I manufactured some of the stuff myself. I made my own grooming chalk, back when people were allowed to use chalk more than it was allowed later on. They still allow it. You just have to be more careful how you use it. I had a lot of customers who liked my chalk better than anybody else's. I bought powder in 100-pound bags, mixed it up and molded it. My business name was California Canine Creations. I also sold jewelry. I was the first person at dog shows who sold a big variety of jewelry. I sold dog charms and pins in 14 carat gold, gold plate and silver. I had a big line of dog jewelry, which I had created and made the models myself for many of the pieces. One of the biggest things I sold was the jewelry.

Unloading the vans with several thousand pounds of stuff in boxes was no easy task. I was alone a good part of the time. In the very early days, there were these fellows who followed the dog show circuit who were there to load and unload for people. That was a big help. In my mid-life time, these people were no longer unloading for others. People started using vans and recreational vehicles that were easier to load and unload, so we no longer had these good old boys who would load and unload for a \$1 or \$2 tip.

Well, I've run out of questions.

Good. I've run out of answers! (laughter)

Thank you very much!

You're welcome.

From The Corgi Quarterly, summer 1996.