



**THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY**

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By, Sanford Day et

## Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly  
Talks With  
**Eileen Danvers and  
Angela Danvers-Smith**  
**FAIRVILLA and  
FAIRVILLA IMPERIAL**  
Coalville, England

### Part II

*This interview was conducted at the home of Mrs. Eileen Danvers in August of 1993 by Ortrud Römer-Horn.*

*Is there quite a variation in the whites?*

Eileen: There are cream and white.

Angela: White cream or cream and biscuit or biscuit and white. You don't see so many colored ones now at all. There are many more whites. There are very few biscuits - I mean wholly biscuit.

Eileen: You get biscuit shading on some of them, but not like we used to see them.

*What is the correct topline?*

Angela: It's a flat topline. You want a decent length of neck, which gives you that proud, arched look, especially when they are alert.

Eileen: They want people to take notice of them. They show off.

*What about tail length and set?*

Angela: There is no definition about length, although some judges, particularly all-rounders, do pull the tail down, which always makes me laugh, because there is nowhere in the standard that says it should be a specific length.

Eileen: It's like they think they are Irish Setters or something. It should curl up over the back.

Angela: And tipped over to one side, but not a curl. It's just draped over one side, or in some cases either side.

Eileen: Whichever way the tail goes, you stand facing the judge that way.

Angela: Yes. Sometimes everyone else is facing the other way, because your dog's tailset comes in a left-handed way.

Eileen: But it was not very often we'd see the breed judges pulling the tail down.

Angela: No, it was the all-rounders. And we'd laugh and think, "Well, what are they doing?" because they'd pull it right down to the floor and it wasn't relevant. As long as it is carried in a proper manner, it doesn't say whether it should be six foot long or two. (laughter) All it says is no curl and that it should be held slightly to one side.

Eileen: It shouldn't be like a Chow's.

*You already mentioned that the ear should be thick?*

Eileen: Yes, a thick, fluffy ear.

Angela: Nicely spaced.

Eileen: And rounded. Not a pointed tip at all.

*What about feet?*

Angela: It shouldn't be catlike, but long and flat, preferably with feathering underneath and in between the toes.

Eileen: We're losing the feathering.

Angela: Yes. We used to see lovely, long feathering. If you walk them on hard ground, it wears the feathering down. You either stop walking them and lose the muscle, or keep walking them and lose the feathering, so it's very difficult. As they get older, though, you normally get profuse feathering. I suppose that's because you cut down on exercise essentially. In the Veteran classes at some shows, we usually see some spectacular feet. But they certainly shouldn't be round, catlike feet.

Eileen: And they shouldn't be trimmed, either. They are bigger in America, and they trim a lot. We don't trim here.

*Have we covered everything you would like to say about the typical Samoyed's temperament?*

Angela: They are very good with children, even if they haven't been brought up with them. And another thing, they are marvelous with old people. They seem to have a second sense somehow. There is Betty, who is a semi-invalid, and Marcus looks after her in a totally different way and is so gentle. He's quite a boisterous, big boy, but not to Betty. If anyone comes into the house, he sits straight at the side of her. In fact, the only time they ever heard Marcus growl was when a salesman came to see her and Marcus sat there all the while between him and Betty. When the salesman got ready to leave, he said, "There you are, Betty," and he just patted her, and Marcus grumbled. They couldn't believe it, because he is not that way at all, but he just couldn't stand the thought of someone strange putting a hand on Betty. I think they've got this extra sense. With children, too, they are different. There can be a tiny tot handling a huge Samoyed very well, and then when the owner does it, the dog drags the owner about. They are really good with a child. Marvelous, really.

*So they make good pets?*

Eileen: Yes, if they are treated right. You have to be willing to give them the proper care. When you sell a puppy, you have to explain all about the coat, the grooming, the exercise and everything else.

Angela: I think it's called the third

degree that Mum used to give people before anyone ever bought anything.

Eileen: I used to hold an inquest. "Do you work?" "Yes, three days a week." "No puppies from me, sorry." (laughter) They are lovely pets, though.

Angela: They like to be a part of the family. They want to be involved with everything the family does. They think they are human, I think, and that's the problem. (laughter)

Eileen: They are quick thinking dogs, and are ahead of you all the time.

*What are the most serious faults today in the Samoyed breed?*

Angela: Movement, I would think is the worst.

Eileen: What about the temperament?

Angela: On the whole, it's not bad, but it is creeping in a bit, though I always wonder if a lot of it is not mishandling. We used to say years ago that you can make or break a dog by handling. A Sammy, on the whole, is such an extrovert that they can go overboard and go one step farther if they are not kept in check. I think movement is the biggest problem at the moment. There are more cow hocked dogs.

Eileen: And bad fronts. The last time I judged, there were a lot of bad fronts.

*Too narrow or too wide?*

Angela: We've got both extremes, really. I think some of the bad movement could be improved with exercise. A lot of people don't do exercise with the Sams that are shown, which sounds crazy, because it is a working dog and should be very muscular throughout. It's one thing I feel very strongly about, and when I judge, I usually have to point it out in the critique about the lack of muscle, but it is important in this breed. A lot of the newer people in the breed think, "We'll feed it, bathe it and show it." But you can't just take a dog to a show without putting a lot of effort into it, especially in a working dog. It might look great, but the soundness and structure aren't there if you've done nothing to help it along. Obviously, it must be born with the correct structure to begin with, but you can add to that.

Eileen: She walks three and a half miles a day, every day, day in and day out.

Angela: There are the fine weather walkers, and then there's the rest of us. (laughter)

*Is the standard a good one?*

Angela: Yes.

*Is there anything you would like to see changed?*

Angela: No, nothing specifically. Ours

is one standard that has probably been changed the least over the years. There have not been a lot of alterations.

Eileen: I don't think I'd alter it now.

Angela: Some people say the lower level of the height ought to be put up, but I think that's a mistake, because you keep going up and up and up. It seems to have worked fairly well so far.

Eileen: You always get the odd one, either above or below.

*What would you consider to be the right size?*

Angela: For a male, 21 inches.

Eileen: Either 21 or 21 1/2. I like a male to look like a male, and a bitch like a bitch. At one time, you could look in the ring and you wondered which was which, and that shouldn't be.

Angela: I think they are bigger overall than they used to be, but that could be due to better feeding. Everything progresses in the natural way of things.

*Are there any disqualifications in the standard?*

Angela: It says "should be severely penalized," not disqualified.

*Would you like to see disqualifications?*

Angela: The biggest thing to be discriminated against is bad temperament. I keep going on about temperament, but a Samoyed should not show any signs of aggression, and if I was judging, I would penalize bad temperament.

Eileen: Or in the house. If a dog or bitch came for me, that would be it. They would be out!

Angela: In the Open class ring, for instance, you might expect a bit of muttering between two males that were used at stud. The funny thing is, normally that is pretty quiet. It's the earlier classes where there is a bit of a problem, say fourteen and fifteen months, and there may be a bit of grumbling between the boys. I wouldn't tolerate a dog turning on me. There is no excuse for that whatsoever.

*In Britain, a champion can go on winning CC's. Do you think this is a good idea?*

Eileen: That's a sore point. No, I don't, but I mean by that not under the same judge two or three times. If they are all under different judges, fair enough. But not under the same judge, over and over again just to get the breed record, and I wouldn't take a champion to an Open show, either. It isn't fair to the others.

Angela: Unless you go into the Veteran classes. I think it's nice to see some of the older champions out there, especially for people who are new in the breed. I don't think we've ever gone on and on with one, but we've gone up to about twelve when Mum said, "Don't take him out again." She didn't want the thirteenth CC.

*What about the specializing they have in the United States?*

Angela: I think that isn't a bad idea, actually. At the moment, the Kennel Club

is reviewing quite a lot of things, and they might be changing things. Through the breed clubs, we are having to fill in questionnaires. Possibly a champion class wouldn't be a bad idea, would it?

Eileen: I think we tried it once and there were hardly any champions to enter.

Angela: But at general championship shows, they wouldn't be allowed to go into the Open class, but would have to go into the following class.

Eileen: They don't compete then for CC's?

*No, they go into the Groups and compete against other breeds.*

Angela: On the other hand, having the champions there that are supposedly good dogs, stops people from picking up tickets for less worthy dogs, because that was the best there on that day when all the champions weren't there. There's two ways of looking at it, really. I wouldn't like to see every champion as soon as it got its third ticket it was retired. I'd like to think they could go on to win more than three.

Eileen: I wouldn't keep on and on though, especially if you have others coming up. You are just doing yourself out of CC's.

*Does it mean anything to you being in the Top Ten or Twenty?*

Angela: Of all the dogs, you mean? I don't think that makes any difference, really.

Eileen: As long as you are breeding to type.

Angela: Very often, the best brood bitches never go into the show ring. That's just the way it goes, though it's nice if it works well both ways.

*Does popularization help or harm a breed?*

Angela: Harm. At Crufts this last time a Sammy won the Group and that's the second time in recent years that a Sammy has won the Working Group, which is great. It's very exciting because it's your breed. But there is then the worry about people seeing the dog on the television. Let's face it, they are a very attractive breed. Then we get people ringing up because they're seeing this white, fluffy thing on the television. It didn't happen, fortunately, which is a good thing, because they are not a breed for everyone.

Eileen: They are more recognized now in the Group.

Angela: Well, I've seen you go into the Group and the judges asked you what it was, but that was years ago, wasn't it? They were quite rare. A lot of people now when you are out walking say, "That's a Samoyed," where years ago, it was always, "What's that?"

*Eileen, when did you start judging?*

Eileen: I think it was in 1963 at the Kobe Kennels, and all the big breeders were there watching me. That's how we used to start up. They were like garden parties. I



Fairvilla Imperial Kizzle.

enjoyed it, but I don't think I had any sleep the night before. I wasn't worried about the dogs, it was the people looking at me. But I must have done it okay, because I went from strength to strength, and in 1979 I was asked to judge Crufts, the top show of the year. There are other shows just as good, but Crufts has got that name.

Angela: I think it's the fact that it is televised. There are numerically bigger shows entrywise, but for the exhibitor, Crufts is one of the worst.

Eileen: It used to be when it was in London, but I don't know about it now.

Angela: They cater more to the spectator than the exhibitor, although it is improving now. How long did we used to have to stay?

Eileen: Until 8:00 at night. You couldn't leave. That year I got Best Dog and Best Bitch, in 1969, we left home at midnight to get to London, and we got there around 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning, and then you couldn't leave until 8:00 that evening, which is a very long day.

*Does one have to qualify for Crufts?*

Angela: You do now, but you didn't used to.

*Is that a good thing?*

Eileen: In some respects, yes, but you still get the odd one that slips through anyway.

Angela: You have to be careful about what you place first, because you are doing more than judging them on that day, you are sending them to Crufts, basically, which should be the cream of the breed. It doesn't work that way, though, does it? That's unfortunate. I dread to think what the numbers would be if they didn't qualify now, because there is quite a big entry these days.

*And when did you get started judging?*

Angela: Everybody used to have to start with a rally, and they should do that now, too, but most of them don't. There are not the rallies there used to be.

Eileen: People haven't got the money to travel to a garden party or whatever these days, with petrol money and this, that and the other thing, which is understandable.

Angela: I don't know what year it was, but it was over twenty years ago.

Eileen: I couldn't tell you. It seems a long time ago.

*Is judging fair?*

Eileen: Most of it is, but you get the odd one who spoils it for everybody else. There is one thing I never believed in and never will, and that is to go drinking with the judges beforehand! You might after. (laughter) I've never done that in my life, and yet I know scores of people who have.

*What can be done to make judging more fair?*

Angela: That's a good question, and, again, that is something the Kennel Club is looking into, where show committees can't judge. They've got to do one job and one job only, because at the moment I think it's, "You pat my back and I'll pat yours." At the end of the day, it's down to each individual and how he or she interprets the standard, and it's like two people looking at the same coat and seeing it differently. It's just in the eyes of the beholder. Some people put a lot of emphasis on heads, as we do, and others like the plainer heads. In that way, usually, you get a variety of dogs that have a shot at being winners. I don't think we will ever make judging totally fair, because it's not like a sport where if you run the fastest one wins and that's the end of the story. It's how different people's eyes interpret the breed. We have seminars and hopefully people will realize what the standard is and what the dog should look like, but they are then also influenced by other outside things and other people, and this will affect their judging.

*When showing your dogs, do you prefer an all-rounder or a breeder-judge?*

Eileen: When I used to show, I used to like the all-rounders.

Angela: We used to have fun with them. Joe Braddon springs to mind very often. He was a real character.

Eileen: With the breeding kennels, we've all got our different ideas. The standard is the same, but the way we each look at it is different. The breed specialist is apt to look for the dogs that are most like those in his own kennels. When an all-rounder put me up, it used to give me more pleasure than anything. We'll scrub that one, shall we? (laughter)

*Is poor judging the result of politics or that the judges lack knowledge about the breed?*

Eileen: Both, really. Some of it is political. That's human nature, isn't it?

Angela: I think it's worse in other

breeds than our breed, and sometimes we think it's bad enough in ours! (laughter) That's something you can't really do anything about.

Eileen: It shouldn't be there, but it is, isn't it?

*Does advertising influence judges?*

Eileen: Sure.

Angela: Possibly, when you get a dog that keeps winning over and over again.

Eileen: They follow the dog papers.

Angela: The all-rounders do, and that could possibly influence them.

*Is it ethical to retouch a show photograph?*

Angela: No, I wouldn't do that.

*Eileen, did you always show your own dogs, or did you sometimes use a handler?*

Eileen: I groomed them, exercised them and showed them.

*What about you, Angela?*

Angela: I used to get the duffers, didn't I? (laughter) We used to take five or six to the shows, and I could guarantee that the naughtiest one was always the one I was going to have. But it stood me in good stead, because by the time you've gone through all the naughty, silly, jumping dogs, you've learned a heck of a lot. You are thrown in at the deep end. You hear your mother laughing at the top of her voice on the benches when a dog has gone on strike, and the whole place in an uproar. (laughter) You either make handler or you don't. I've taken all sorts into the ring.

Eileen: I've never employed a handler.

Angela: It's not the normal thing in our breed, actually. I can't think of anyone, really, who hires a professional handler in our breed.

*Have you ever handled other people's Samoyeds?*

Angela: Yes, sometimes.

Eileen: I've never gone in with a puppy to start them off or anything like that. I told them what to do. They've got to learn, haven't they? But if someone was feeling poorly, had brought a dog, then I might help them out.

*How do you socialize your puppies?*

Angela: All ours are just mixing in right from the word go.

Eileen: You always bring them into the house. They are whelped in the house.

Angela: They are kenneled in the early days, because obviously Mum and pups need peace and quiet, and for safety's sake. During the early weeks, I make it a point to go in very often. I talk to them from the time they are born, and they say they can't hear a thing, which makes you feel silly.

Eileen: They've got to be handled.

Angela: Once they can get about, they are in the house and mix with the other big dogs, which gets them used to the doggy side of things, anyway. And they have all the different people around them. I think it is very important.

Eileen: And the more people who handle them, the better.

Angela: Then, depending on how many we keep for ourselves, they get individual attention. I don't walk them all together, but separately while they're babies, and they should get used to the collar and lead before they are actually taken outside. I get them used to the car and going different places. It's just common sense. If you keep a dog away from everything for long enough, they are not going to socialize.

Eileen: She keeps them in until after their shots.

*Do you attend fun matches or training classes?*

Angela: Not now. We used to years ago.

*Have you ever obedience trained your dogs?*

Angela: No, we've never done that. I admire people who do, especially with Sammys, and there are one or two that do quite well, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

*Have you ever done agility?*

Angela: No, but I would like to. It's just finding the time.

*How intelligent is the Samoyed compared with other breeds?*

Angela: Very, but whether they use their intelligence is another matter.

Eileen: They are intelligent. They are brainy kids. (laughter)

Angela: They are much more of a free spirit than are a lot of intelligent dogs. You can train a Sammy to the highest level of obedience, and at the highest event, suddenly, they will do something that is completely out of character with everything. Having done it for three or four years and knowing and doing it perfectly, on the big day, they will not perform, or do something very naughty, and that's the way they are.

Eileen: Just when you think you have the upper hand, they will think of something to outdo you with to surprise you.

Angela: Yes. "You are allowed to live with me if ..." (laughter)

Eileen: But they make good pets and are very faithful.

*Should a Samoyed be taken off-lead?*

Angela: Not if you want to see it again! (laughter) Some are fine off the lead, but you are never 100 percent sure of a Samoyed. They may be as good as gold for five years, but you can never say they won't do something out of the ordinary.

Eileen: I would never take one up the road off the lead. If they saw something across the road, they'd be gone.

Angela: They've got no road sense at all. They are so nosy, they have to be involved with everything.

*How important is training to winning in conformation?*

Eileen: You've got to start them from the time they are puppies. People used to ring me up and say, "Oh, I won't bother

yet. She's only a baby," and the dog is twelve months old. Mind you, we're in the ring at six months! You've got to start off early.

Angela: The earlier the better. Hopefully, it will then sink in a bit. Not that they will always do it, but it's there and it is just up to them to decide to recall that memory. Once they've got it, it's there. I think they may be slower learners than some breeds. You sometimes think they are never going to get something, then suddenly it's twigged, and once it's twigged, that's it.

*Can shy or aggressive dogs be corrected by training?*

Angela: A lot of it, yes.

Eileen: As I said, you've got to start off very young. People let their dogs bark and bark and bark just because they are babies, but you can't do that.

Angela: And I think so much aggression is where the dog has decided to take one step further with the owner. Really, remove the owner and the problem is gone. It's like a child that stamps its feet, in a way. If it doesn't get told off for doing it the first time, then it just keeps on doing it. That's something you have to watch, that they don't take the upper hand.

*Do you think sometimes that a big-name handler helps a dog to win when a judge judges the wrong end of the lead?*

Eileen: It used to go on, but I don't know whether it still does or not. But if you haven't got the stock, you can't win, or you shouldn't win, anyway. It goes back to socializing with the judges again. I never did it, and there's no point in starting now. (laughter)

*What specific advice might you give to a new owner if he/she would like to begin showing?*

Angela: Back to basic training, but get a puppy from a reputable breeder, which is the first, important step. You should also talk to as many people in the breed as possible before you buy a puppy. Don't just go to the first kennel you see. If you specifically want to show, you need to get good quality stock to do that. There is an odd flyer in any breed, but as a general rule it needs to be from a well bred line. Then start training. We used to start at about nine weeks, not outside. They got to do all the things before they were inoculated. You need to start off right from the word go, bearing in mind that you want to show the dog. It's not good to teach a dog to sit as a basic command, which a lot of people do, and then they come to you in six months and say, "How do I go about showing?" You say, "You haven't taught him to sit, have you?" And they say, "Oh, yes," which is a fatal mistake, because if they see a biscuit or anything, they automatically sit.

Eileen: When we used to sell a puppy, we used to give a diet sheet with grooming instructions and everything else, and when

they were ready to fetch the puppy, we'd give them a grooming demonstration and the lot, which helped an awful lot of people, I think.

*Do you have any favorite grooming products?*

Angela: Just a comb and flat hand brush. That's a daily one we use, and then you need a comb for combing right down to the skin, and what we call a fluffing up brush. I do all the work for the show at home, so that when I get to a show all I have to do is tidy them up.

Eileen: They really want combing out once a week or once a fortnight, right down to the skin, because they've got the undercoat as well as the topcoat.

*Do you have any favorite shampoos?*

Angela: Not really. We've always used Fairy Liquid or Fairy Soap. A lot of the products they say are good for white coats don't do any more than Fairy, anyway.

Eileen: There's times I've gone to the shows with four and five dogs, did all the bathing and grooming here, and when you get to the show, there is somebody else there that you've sold a puppy to that is badly groomed. Then you start on them.

Angela: Mum always told me to do it before I got there, because if you are late, or something holds you up, at least you know your dog is groomed properly and you've only got to tidy it up. That's how I've always done it. A lot of people you see

doing it on the day of the show. With a breed like this, it's a big job to do in the space of time they've got, so they can't do it properly.

*Have you ever worked your Samoyeds sledging?*

Angela: I did once, but never again! Tell it.

Angela: It was quite a frightening experience.

Eileen: Well, they go one way and the sleds go the other, don't they? (laughter)

Angela: I remember putting my two sons, who were very small at the time, onto a smaller sled, and we were going around a fenced-in playing field, which I thought would be quite safe. I had a long lead on, and it was the first time I'd done it with them. I told my two sons to hang on. I didn't realize that once they got going they got into the spirit of it, and I was going SO fast so as not to let the lead go. (laughter) I could just see these two dogs and my two children going far away! They finally went up the bank and tipped everybody over. (laughter)

Eileen: The dogs really enjoy it, but overenthusiasm springs to mind. There are one or two now that seem to show an interest.

*So you got the idea that the breed still knew what it was bred for?*

Angela: Definitely! (laughter)

*Are your matings natural or controlled?*



Ch. Fairvilla Emerald.

Eileen: Natural, but the stud dogs need help now and again. You've got to keep track of the bitch, follow the seasons, so you know exactly where you are. The bitches vary from season to season anyway. It's knowing your bitches. The dog will pick the right day. I never just let them alone.

Angela: No, they are supervised.

*Do you muzzle the bitch?*

Angela: No.

Eileen: If there was one that was aggressive, I just would not mate it.

*Are your males at public stud?*

Eileen: They weren't at public stud, as such, but there were a chosen few.

Angela: Approved bitches only, and it's still that way. I don't believe in using a stud dog for any bitch that comes along. Mum always used to match the bitch's pedigree, and not just say the stud fee was nice to have. It didn't work like that. All the bad faults always come back on the stud dog. Rightly or wrongly, it's ALWAYS the stud dog that's at fault if you hear people talk. I don't agree with that theory, but that's the way it works.

Eileen: Yes, it's, "Look what he's throwing."

Angela: So you try as much as possible to put your stud dogs to good bitches. It doesn't always work out, but it's better than just using them with any bitch.

*Have you ever refused to service a bitch, and if so, for what reasons?*

Angela: Yes we have, because they weren't compatible, or, as one lady said before she slammed the phone down, "You mean YOUR dog is too good for MY bitch!" (laughter) I was trying to be very polite, but I said, "If that's the way you want to put it, yes." She said there was a lot of Fairvilla in the pedigree and I asked her to send me a copy of it. There was one Fairvilla at the very end of the pedigree and that was it.

Eileen: The trouble with the youngsters is they think if you put a champion bitch to a champion dog, you get all champions, but it doesn't work that way at all.

Angela: As we said earlier, very often the ones that aren't shown produce the best stock. There's no telling what makes a good brood bitch or a good stud dog, really. It's not just putting a title in front of it that did it, but it is something in their gene bank that determines it. They may not look the best themselves, but what they produce from their bloodlines is good.

*So you don't think it is a good idea to go to the top winner regardless of pedigree?*

Eileen: Definitely not.

*When you turned bitches down, did the owners listen to your advice or did they go to somebody else?*

Eileen: It goes both ways, really.

Angela: Yes. Sometimes they listen and sometimes they don't. They carry on

regardless of hips or whatever, and there again, sometimes it's the vet who is at fault. They tend to say, "Fifty is not a very high score," but the breed average is fourteen, and I wouldn't recommend breeding from anything that wasn't anywhere near that sort of score. You've got to use common sense, because, obviously, to disregard a dog or bitch solely on hips, if they are within reasonable ranges, is ridiculous, because you also are eradicating other things you probably need. You've got to be sensible about the hips.

Eileen: You don't have to concentrate just on hips.

Angela: If you have a slightly high score, you would put it with a lower scored bitch or vice versa. Either way, it doesn't stamp it out. You can only try to do your best within what you've got.

*Would you ever breed to a dog with a serious fault if it was outstanding otherwise?*

Eileen: It would depend on what the fault was.

Angela: I certainly wouldn't put a dog of mine to an aggressive, nasty bitch, and we never have done that, have we? It would depend upon what sort of glaring fault it is.

*Which faults would keep you away?*

Eileen: Badly broken pigment.

Angela: It depends again on what's behind it. Too often these days, people look at their bitch as she stands, and the dog, but they don't go back on those. It may be that bitch will produce nothing like herself, and she could produce faults that go back through the generations, or good stuff. Just to look at a dog and bitch and decide to breed is not a good idea. I like to do a bit of ins and outs.

Eileen: Even if you have to pick your mother's brains to do it. (laughter)

*What is your ideal of how many litters a bitch should have?*

Angela: No more than four, really.

Eileen: It depends on the bitch, how she whelps and the stock she produces.

Angela: I wouldn't like to think I was overbreeding, and I believe four is the most I've had, out of Ch. Fairvilla Emerald, because she was a very easy whelp. I have another one that's had two litters and she'll soon be seven. I would never ever breed a bitch in consecutive seasons. Even before those regulations came in, we never did that.

Eileen: Not unless it was one that came into season every twelve months or every fourteen months.

Angela: Well, yes, but not with one that has a normal season cycle of every six months. We never have done that, and we didn't need the Kennel Club to tell us that, either, did we? The well-being of your stock comes above everything else. If you don't keep them healthy, there is no way you are going to produce the sort of stock

Mum has produced over the years. But, really, it depends on the individual bitches.

*What is the youngest and oldest they should be bred?*

Eileen: This is where we differ. I always used to wait until mine were eighteen or nineteen months to have their first litter, and they used to mature beautifully afterwards.

Angela: I always tend to leave mine until later.

Eileen: Too late! (laughter) I've gone up to six years.

Angela: I had one that was seven. It would depend upon when they have their seasons, and so forth, and if they are healthy.

*Are you with your bitches when they whelp?*

Angela: All night.

Eileen: Two and three nights altogether, day and night.

Angela: Sams aren't the best of whelpers as a general rule, and to leave them to their own ends would be a bit silly - besides which it is very exciting! (laughter)

*When do you start supplement feeding the puppies?*

Angela: At two and a half to three weeks.

Eileen: Weaning is one job I did not like. They were so slow picking up licking and what have you. I used to get Angela on her knees. She had nothing else to do.

Angela: And I did enjoy it. It depends on how big the litter is. Sometimes you wean some earlier than you would others, and I've reared one or two with bottle-feeding.

*At what age do you evaluate the puppies?*

Angela: As they go on.

Eileen: You say, "There's your dog, and there's your bitch," but it doesn't always work out that way, obviously, because there are other points.

Angela: Like structure and movement that you must wait until they are old enough to assess anyway. There is always something about them so that you can tell, isn't there?

*Do you cull?*

Angela: No. We've fought for every one of them. We've never culled.

*Are your puppies all priced the same, or are show prospects a different price?*

Angela: There is one price for all of them. We never guarantee a show quality puppy, because I don't think anyone can do that, and I think it's a silly statement to sell one as a show quality puppy. No matter how good a puppy looks at seven weeks, there is no guarantee that it will turn out that way, and the people who buy the puppy have a lot to do with it as well, so I would never guarantee one.

*Should a stud fee be the same as the price for a puppy?*

Angela: If it is a proven dog that pro-

duces good stock, it would be worthy of the price of a puppy, and some people seem to want more.

*What is the price of a good puppy?*

Angela: I think an average today is about £300 or £350.

*Do you sometimes sell on terms or only on a cash basis?*

Angela: I've never done one on terms.

*Have you ever sold on spay/neuter contracts?*

Angela: No.

*Have you had co-ownerships or puppies back when you sell a bitch?*

Eileen: No.

*At what age does the puppy go to its new home?*

Angela:

Between seven and eight weeks.

Eileen: Of course, if they go overseas, you have to keep them longer before they are sent.

Angela: The ideal age is seven weeks, for the puppy's sake, and it depends on the people's experience and if they are old hands, so to speak, and it's not their first puppy. Then it's seven weeks.

Again, you've got to use a little bit of common sense. Some puppies come on quickly and are ready to go earlier than others, but not before seven weeks.

*What do you feed your dogs?*

Angela: It's not that long ago when we used to cook raw meat, but when that cow disease came along, we went off that idea. Now we feed tinned meat and mixer biscuit.

*What about supplements?*

Angela: Calcium to puppies up to twelve months, and pregnant bitches, cod liver oil and garlic pearls.

*Did you say all you wanted to about conditioning the dogs?*

Eileen: It's just exercise, and lots of love and affection, although some days you could crown them! (laughter)

Angela: Some days they deliberately wind you up for the day.

*Do you trim whiskers?*

Eileen: No. There is no trimming whatsoever in Sammies. You might like to trim their tongues at times, though. (laugh-

ter)

Angela: They are not the quietest of breeds.

Eileen: No, they are barkers, and one sets the other off.

Angela: Even if you have only one it seems to be quite vocal, doesn't it? It's just in their nature. I wish it wasn't, but on the other hand, I don't believe in debarking, so I've got no option.

*Angela, how big is your land and how do you keep your dogs?*

Angela: They are free running. The only time they go into kennels is at night when the girls go into the kennels. The rest of the time they run as a group - inside,

a male yet that leads the pack. It's always been a bitch that has been the "top dog," so to speak.

*What advice would you give to a newcomer who wants to breed Samoyeds?*

Eileen: I'd start off by telling them all about puppies first of all, and tell them to go around to as many shows as they possibly can to meet and talk with different people. There are all kinds of differing views, and there is always a Sammy that you like better than the others.

Angela: And to think very carefully before they start.

Eileen: You have to be honest with people. There is no use hiding the bad faults.

Angela: Mum always said that if you tell people everything bad there is to tell about the breed, and they still want a puppy

...

Eileen: At least they've been warned.

Angela: Sometimes you don't tell them quite everything. (laughter) No, it's not really that bad.

*What is the Sammy character?*

Eileen: Each one is different.

Angela: There are similarities, but they each have their individual ways.

*Which kennels would you consider the best ones these days?*

Angela: There aren't many left, are there? There aren't enough left where you can pick



Ch. Fairvilla Imperial Meggie.

outside. (laughter) Everything is fenced, of course, so they can have the freedom, but we know they are safe. They like to join in with everything and everyone, don't they? They are part of the family.

Eileen: You've got to treat them as such or there is no peace if you don't, so you might as well give in to them. (laughter)

*So you keep your adult males and bitches together?*

Angela: Yes, though I wouldn't recommend people have two males together. Sometimes they get on, but there is always the odd chance that they will fall out. People always assume that a male leads the pack, but I don't know that we've ever had

out individual ones.

Eileen: I wouldn't pick out one now. At one time, there used to be the Kobes, the Whitewisps, Fairvillas, Sworddales, Snowcryst and Crownies, but I can't say anybody now. There are no large kennels. It's funny how it's gone. There used to be big kennels, but now there are only little offshoots, really.

*Tell us a bit about the organization of Samoyeds in Britain.*

Angela: There are four clubs, and the Samoyed Association is the premier club. The British Samoyed Club is the midlands area, and the Northern Society is in the north, and the Samoyed Breeders is the southern one, which is the newest club. I

hope everyone is not working for the political side, but working to keep the Samoyed as it is, and is looking after the interests of the breed. We all do various things to raise funds. At the moment, we are in the throes of trying to raise at least £20,000 to do a revised edition of the Samoyed book, which we've done before, but this will be a completely updated version, though not started completely from scratch again. So, we are trying to raise funds for that at the moment, because it is very expensive to republish books of any kind. We want it to be the standard book, and it has always been THE book for people buying Samoyed puppies. Then we just generally organize events and shows and one thing and another.

*Are there any other books on the Samoyed?*

Angela: They are few and far between. I think there are a couple of American books, but ours was the complete book, which was sort of the history of the breed. It had everything, really, and was a good reference book. It still is, but we are almost out of copies, which is why we are trying to get funds to have a new one done. The American book shows their way of doing things, which differs from ours. It also shows trimming, and to someone who doesn't know any different, they will follow what they read in a book, so I think it is important that we get this book going once more. But there aren't an awful lot of books on the Samoyed.

*What about magazines or club newsletters?*

Angela: The association issues three each year, and most of the others do two issues, I think. It keeps the general membership in touch with them.

*Would you recommend that a newcomer join a local club?*

Angela: Yes, or joining a club of some sort: It's important to keep in touch with other people involved in the breed. With a specialized breed like this, it's important that people get help, and to continue to get help, because there are all sorts of problems that occur. So, yes, I would suggest that.

*Eileen, tell us about your family background.*

Eileen: There were no dogs whatsoever. (laughter) There was nobody who was breeding dogs. They never bred the Greyhounds. We always had a dog of some sort at home, usually a gundog for my father, but nobody who bred anything. I was the only stupid one in the family. (laughter)

I have two sons and a daughter and seven grandchildren. You don't notice too many doggy pictures around. I can't put them all up, so I won't put up one without the other. In the old place I lived, I used to have plenty of room to put up all the rosettes and cups around, but I can't do that here. Angela has plenty of room, though.

*So at your house there are a lot of doggy photos on the walls?*

Angela: There is no room without



Ch. Fairvilla Imperial Aga Khan, "Bersalac."

them.

*Has it been worth it?*

Eileen: Yes, I wouldn't be without them.

Angela: There has been a lot of heart-break.

Eileen: But they give you a lot of pleasure. I'd like to carry it on, really, but there's no hope of that. Old age doesn't wait. (laughter)

*In looking back over the years, what was a memorable highlight?*

Eileen: The Crufts win, I think. And judging Crufts, too, but to do the double that day meant more to me than anything. I didn't come down to earth again until about two weeks afterwards. (laughter) It was just out of this world.

*What was your highlight, Angela?*

Angela: I haven't had any, really. Hopefully, it is still to come! (laughter)

*On the other hand, what was the most heart-breaking thing over the years?*

Angela: Losing stock for whatever reason. Whether it is old age or something else, it is still very painful.

Eileen: Still a loss.

Angela: It breaks your heart.

*Is there anything you would like to add or some final words?*

Eileen: It's been lovely meeting you. (laughter) I must be honest with you, I wasn't looking forward to this, but I've quite enjoyed it. I've forgotten about everything now, but it comes back. You set me off thinking again.

*I hope a lot of good memories came back to you.*

Eileen: Oh, yes, definitely.

*Thank you very much for talking with us.*