

## REVIEW BY MR FRANK KANE

### THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER IN SOUTH AFRICA

compiled and edited by Di Holman and June Trautmann

This hard backed volume of 275 pages carries a dedication "to all who love Labrador Retrievers" and I think it will bring much pleasure worldwide to those who are interested in the breed.

Di Holman and June Trautmann have traced the foundation and development of the breed in South Africa and the book celebrates the first fifty years of the Labrador Retriever Kennel Club in that country. The first chairman and driving force behind the club was the late George Jenkin - well known in Labrador and gundog circles in the UK and the first patrons Lorna Countess Howe and Maurice Gilliat - so, with household names to steer the club it set off in good hands. Early judges of the club's championship shows included Gwen Broadley; Margot Woolley; Bridget Docking and Norman Robinson of Mallardhurn fame. Looking through the accounts of the early days of the breed in South Africa, one can see the tremendous influence that these judges had on the breed, with exports from their kennels providing a sound basis for producing quality, typical Labradors. The book is generously illustrated and it is fascinating to see this pictorial record of early, and more recent dogs.

A major contribution to the book is made by Rose-Marie Cabion whose Sleepy Hollow kennel has been a dominant force in the breed in South Africa. Mrs Cabion judged a large entry of Labradors at the LKA show in the UK a few years ago and her judging was widely acclaimed. Her anecdotes of her early showing and breeding and her first shopping trip to the UK make absorbing reading - and the acquisition of her Follytower Old Oak and his later success as show dog and sire all make compulsive reading as do the other accounts of influential breeders recounting their involvement in the breed. It all makes absorbing material for anyone interested in the breed - in ANY country; the world is a small place when it comes to a breed and its pedigrees!

For myself, whose first involvement in the breed was in the early 1960s, via our neighbour's shooting dog - a beautiful black bitch by CH Reanacre Mallardhurn Thunder, it was a walk down memory lane. It was good to see also a lovely photo of Pam and John Richardson's CH Foulby Roaming Free at Brightwood - whom I saw as a young puppy at Foulby before he left for South Africa - what a good dog he turned out to be!

Similarly, the development of the working Labrador and Field Trials is well documented and illustrated and here again the best Field Trial bloodlines were used as a foundation with Major Wilde's black dog CH Zelstone Raven of the Brigade proving a dominant force with success in the show ring too. Major Wilde had exports from Sandylands and other kennels and at the first club championship show, three of the top four awards carried his breeding.

And then an extensive section of pedigrees of South African champions and influential dogs - a real encyclopaedia for the connoisseur.

The book also relates the historical ties with the South African Guide- Dogs Association and its work. Indeed, part of the profits from the sales of this book will go to the Association and Labrador Rescue and the breed club - so this book really is a labour of love for the breed

"To evaluate the present one must have a knowledge of the past" a saying that holds true for most things in life, but sadly, I feel that many exhibitors and new breeders are rooted to the present; the current winners, the current type - whether that type is correct or not - and so it is invigorating to find a book that will give all interested in the breed an encyclopaedia of knowledge which relates and illustrates the development of the breed. I spent a November weekend in the UK enjoying the accounts of the breed in sunny South Africa. As I said, when it comes to dog breeding, it's a small world!

Frank Kane