



## Countess Marina Violet "Dicky" Ouvaroff (1931-2012)

A gathering to celebrate Dicky's life was held at the Dogs NSW Complex February 5, 2013.

Frank Pieterse spoke to the official eulogy he had delivered at the funeral and that will be published in the Dogs NSW Journal, but here are some selections from the many other tributes on the day. One of the best anecdotes was about Dicky and a valuable crown, but that one is not for publication!



At the AGM held in August she was appointed Publicity Officer, at the same meeting she donated 5 guineas for Best Dog and Bitch at the Championship Show. Then in October 1959 it all went pear shaped, the Secretary, Treasurer and Publicity Officer Dicky resigned and as they say in the movies nothing more was heard.

During her time with the Club she would have been a contemporary of some of the giants of the Gundog scene, the DeGroen brothers, Roy Burnell and Bob Philp.

I sometimes find it sad that we only hear about some unknown facets of a person's life when we attend their Funeral or as in the case of our friend Dicky this memorial. Frank touched briefly on her involvement with Helen Sapio's Labradors, I hope that some of the memories I am going to share with you will not only add to the picture that is being built up of her, but will give you an insight into the way the dog world was conducted in the more genteel 1950s.

I have here the original Minute Book of the Labrador Retriever Club of NSW which was founded in November 1957. The Minutes record that amongst those present at the meeting held in February 1958 was Countess Ouvaroff. She took an active part in the running of the Club and at the meeting held in March 1958 when arrangements were discussed for the afternoon tea to be held at the Inaugural Championship Show it was agreed that she would provide four dozen buttered pikelets (an early indication of her culinary skills), at the same meeting she moved that the entry fees for the show be 4/6d, she also volunteered to be the Card writer. At the May meeting of the same year Dickie proposed that 2 guineas be sent to Mr Anderson for the Roneoing he had done for the Club (no computers in those days).

At a Committee Meeting held in November Dickie was nominated to judge the February Parade. At the meeting held in April 1959 she was appointed Editor of the proposed Club Newsletter. Of interest to Frank was that at the following meeting held in May the Secretary was instructed to write to the Dalwood Dog Show regarding the Club policy on Trophy Donations.

In the comprehensive *History of the Labrador Retriever in Australia from 1929 to 1983* an entry in the Queensland chapter records that Countess Ouvaroff owned several Labradors in Queensland during the fifties and bred several litters under her "Dallam" prefix.

My first encounter with Dicky was in the mid-sixties at a show at the old Parramatta Showground, an imposing lady with a large hat, stentorian voice and a walking stick, one exhibitor who complained about the stick was admonished with, "*it's a good test of temperament m'dear*".

It was through Dickie that I became a benefactor of the Shih Tzu Club, buying many raffle tickets over at least two decades.

At my last encounter with her she greeted me with the familiar "*have you heard this one?*"

It is often said that the Dog World does not have Personalities as in the past; with the passing of Dicky we have lost another one. May she rest in peace.

Hugh Gent, AOM

