**BETTIE TOWN OBITUARY by Jon Kean**

**Bettie Town, who has died aged 89, was the doyenne of working English Setter gundogs in the United Kingdom.**

**She was a formidable lady who did not suffer fools gladly. She had a very sharp mind and a remarkable memory, an avid reader her general knowledge was amazing. Her common sense and her sense of humour were second to none and the phrase ‘lived life to the full’ could have been written for her. Forward thinking she loved the company of young people and was always young in mind and spirit. Bettie Town’s family and friends were one of the most important things in her life, followed very closely by her love for Pointers and Setters, in particular English Setters.**

**She was born Elizabeth Mary Knight in Doncaster on August 7,1923 along with her twin brother John. Their father Edwin was a Quantity Surveyor and their mother Lillian was a teacher. The family moved to live in Walkworth where she attended the Duchess School in Alnwick, they then moved onto to live at Lakeside in Darlington.**

**She loved sport of any kind and when young was a keen swimmer spending many hours swimming in the River Coquet. She also loved diving and was Captain of the Durham County Netball Team. In later life she went onto Captain Leake Ladies Crocket team at a time when there was no men’s team and the ladies team were able to keep the Ground going until a men’s team was re-established. She was a Vice President of the Leake men’s team since 1978.**

**Bettie Town loved all sport, possibly with the exception of football, her favourites being cricket,tennis and golf. Yearly pilgrimages were made to Lords and Trent Bridge to watch vaious Test matches. She always said that there were ulterior motives behind her invitation to join the party as she was chief smuggler – her thermos flasks being used as a means of getting various alcoholic beverages into the ground!**

**When young she had aspired to be a PE teacher, but her mother did not think that was an appropriate career and when she arrived home after a Summer spent with her twin cousins Jack and Harold on their farm at East Ardsley,West Yorkshire,wearing her uncle’s riding breeches she was strongly encouraged to attend a secretarial course in Darlington. She said she did more work in one year at the Secretarial College than she did in the whole of her school career and it changed her life, leading to her employment in 1942 with Captain W Parlour at Monkend Hall, Croft in North Yorkshire.**

**Captain Parlour was a landowner and shooting gentleman and Bettie Town soon learnt how to shoot. She shot her first grouse on Doctor’s Gate,part of Bollihope Moor in the mid 1940’s and she went onto become a very proficient shot.**

**Captain Parlour shot over Pointers and Setters and his kennel of Sharnberry English Setters was world famous. Each year Captain Parlour and his friends would shoot grouse over the Sharnberry Setters for as long as the weather was favourable for dog work. In 1973, there were 8 field trial Champion English Setters in the Sharnberry Kennel. The Sharnberry Setters were handled and trained by Bettie Town, and the keepers on the estate, Mr T Spark, Mr T Lauder and Mr D Harrison in particular. However the first award Bettie Town won at a field trial was with a Pointer called Boss in 1949 in Scotland. The award was an afterthought by the Judges as they decided overnight after the Stake had finished that Boss and her handler deserved a Certificate of Merit giving them the award the next morning. The first English Setter she handled was Field Trial Champion Sharnberry Whitestone. As a first dog she always said she was spoilt by him as he was one of those once in a lifetime dogs winning more awards than any other English Setter in the UK, including the English Setter Challenge Trophy in 6 consecutive years between 1951 and 1956. She went onto win this trophy for a final time in 2002. She won the Pointer and Setter Champion Stake three times with English Setters – FT CH Sharnberry Red Bracken in 1970, FT CH Little Dodi of Sharnberry in 1973 and FT CH Sharnberry Dougal in 1978. She won many other field trials and made up numerous Field Trial Champions.**

**She was an A Panel judge and judged the Pointer and Setter Champion Stake twice. She had been a member of the Kennel Club since 1974, a member of the Field Trials Liaison Council and was the first lady to be elected onto the Kennel Club Field Trials Sub Committee from the Kennel Club, a position she held for 20 years. She was also a past Secretary of the International Gundog League Pointer and Setter Society, Vice President of that Club, President of the Yorkshire Gundog Club and President of The English Setter Club. In 1963 she married Alwyn Town, an Insurance Broker and they moved to live at Rose Bank, Borrowby in 1964, the home in which she spent the rest of her life. When Captain Parlour died in 1977 she became one of the Executors of his Estates and worked in this capacity until 1985. In her early years working for Captain Parlour she was very much a minority, a lady in a man’s world as in those days there were very few ladies involved in field trials or shooting.**

**She enjoyed travelling especially to visit cousins in South Africa and Dorset.**

**Her recipe for a long life: work hard, play hard, a wonderful sense of humour, common sense, she was always an optimist and she was always young in mind and looking forward to the next new experience. She never gave up on life’s adventure and grabbed it with both hands.**

**Bettie Town, born August 7,1923, died July 16,2013.**