

# THE IRISH SETTER

MODERN DOGS (SPORTING DIVISION)

(Vol II - Fourth Edition )

Written and compiled by Mr. Rawdon B. Lee

**Explanatory Notes:** Mr. Rawson Lee's Irish Setter composition spans a period prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Researching the early 1800's Lee corresponded with Mr. W.C Bennet of Dublin (not to be confused with Mr. John Bennett also mentioned in the text) who obtained intermit knowledge from source breeders, or their immediate family in Ireland. Controversy around the "true" origins and colour of the breed abounded in the early half of the century. Was a red & white or a red coloured dog a genuine Irish Setter?

The beginning of the text spans the transformation period when Irish Red & White Setters (deemed today to be the fore-runners of the popular Irish Red Setters) were evolving into the solid Irish Red Setters which breeders favoured in the latter half of the century. However it must be noted that the Setter breeds were not clearly defined during this period and "families" kept and developed their own Setter strains, so one finds the names of Llewelin and Laverack mentioned both of whom were prominent figures in the development of English Setters. There is also mentions of Irish Reds which were believed to have a touch of Gordon Setter blood.

Only with the establishment of the Kennel Club (UK) in 1873 and the Irish Red Setter Club (Dublin) in 1886 who formulated the first Breed Standard for the Irish Red Setter were accurate and collective records kept and the Setter breeds clearly defined. Interest in the Irish Red & White Irish waned in the second half of the 19th century and it was only in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century that a concerted effort was made to resurrect the breed, which today is classified as a separate although "Vulnerable Breed" by the UK Kennel Club.

There was only one illustrative black and white print which accompanied Lee's text. This is a photo from an original painting of a brace of setters on the moors by Arthur Wardle painted in 1896 and is reprinted at the end of the text, but other art work, photographs and early pedigrees of the period have been added with explanatory captions, for the reader's interest and enjoyment.

**Bridget Simpson**

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It has often struck me as being extraordinary that so little is known of the origin of the Irish setter – that he is an old dog in his purity there is not the slightest doubt. He has been alluded to by writers early in the present century, but they have failed to tell us what kind of a dog he was, either in colour or form. I believe him to have been red, or red and white in colour; a smart, active animal, full of courage, rather headstrong, an untiring working, with olfactory organs quite as good as any other dog used for a similar purpose

And how strange it seems that the native Irish dogs are for the most part red or brown. This may be a favourite Milesian colour or it may be the result of accident. One cannot say that the Irish red setter the Irish terrier, and the water spaniel of Ireland came at any recent date from one stock. Still their colours, if not quite alike, are similar, and for modern taste, the redder the terrier and the setter are, the better.

Failing to find anything of particular interest in the early days of Irish setter, I turned to **Mr. W. C. Bennet, of Dublin**, a gentleman who has made the variety his hobby, and he most kindly promised to do what he could for me in the matter. The following particulars from his pen will no doubt be read with interest:

*“ My inquiries relative to the above breed have tended to convince me that, so far at least as the Midland and Western Counties of Ireland, Dublin, and its vicinity, were concerned (which were best known to my three first named informants, whose experience and opinions are given below) the red setter was but seldom encountered, and that red and white Irish setters (differing in many essential qualities and in general appearance from the English variety) were well known and highly esteemed.*

*That this assertion will be met with an indignant denial from the owners and exhibitors of the red dogs at present gracing the bench and holding their own in Field Trials, I am quite prepared for, but how far back does their recollection carry them? The first gentleman I interviewed on the subject was **Mr. Mahon**, one of the old **Ross Mahon stock, of Galway fame, now over eighty years of age, and son of the Rev. H. Mahon, of Castlegar**, an ardent sportsman and owner of many setters, all of which were red and white, and who held the opinion often expressed to his son, that this was the true colour of the Irish setter. This gentleman’s recollection carried him back to the last century (he having died in the year 1838)*



**The Duke of Kingston's favourite hunting dog "Rover"  
by artist George Haugh in 1776  
exhibited at the Doncaster Museum, England**

*The present Mr. Mahon informs me that in his early days dogs wholly red were rare, though such, he admits existed, and were considered more difficult to break than the red and white, which, he says, were smaller. A strain of them, called the 'Ahascragh breed' kept in his family were highly prized, but which, from being bred in and in by the gamekeeper, Jemmy Fury, degenerated into weeds. He especially mentions one, called Sylvie, which he obtained from Charles Mahon, of Mount Pleasant, Co. Mayo; she was a big bitch, beautifully feathered, very enduring and staunch, and with her he hoped to resuscitate the Ahascragh strain. Owing, however, to the death of his father, he abandoned the attempt. Mr. Mahon purchased two dogs from Mr. Buchanan for Sir St. George Gore, about the year 1838, which were wholly red in colour, and this gentleman appears to have kept the whole coloured almost, if not entirely, in his kennels.*

*Mr. Baker, of Lismacue, Co. Tipperary, was a firm adherent of the red and white variety, and Mr. Mahon considers his breed a particularly good one; they had black noses, and were fine upstanding dogs selected with care, with good feathering and low carriage of stern.*



**This Irish Red & White Setter was preserved by a taxidermist about 1880. Apart from the fading of the “red” patches in the clear white coat (no ticking) it is in remarkably good condition. The dog stood approximately 24 inches (60cms) at the withers and is exhibited in the Fly Fishing & Game Shooting Museum, Attanagh Co. Laois, Ireland.**

*My next informant was **Mr. John Bennett, of Grange, King’s County**, who hunted the country for over 30 years, and whose recollection goes back to the early part of the present century. So far back as the year 1835 he owned a light red bitch called Cora, which he mated with a red dog, the property of the late Capt. Vaughan, of Golden Grove, King’s County, one of the O’Connor breed, which, so far as he can recollect, were all red. Capt Vaughan had two brace of the strain in his kennels, and all these were red with black noses, sterns carried low (a point then, as now highly valued), large sized and muscular.*

*Mr. Bennett considers the O’Connor and Yelverton O’Keeffe’s strain of red and white setters the best he ever shot over. The latter paid great attention to keeping them pure, and adhered to the parti-coloured in preference to the whole coloured variety, though, strange to say, the last of the race was a red dog in the possession of the late Charley O’Keeffe of Parsonstown, son of Yelverton O’Keeffe. This Mr. Bennet accounts for this by Yelverton O’Keeffe’s admission that he had used a red in the strain, having bred from a handsome specimen in the possession of Long, a coachmaker in Mary Street, Dublin, which had a cross of the O’Connor breed, but Mr. Bennett says the wholly red were scarce and much more difficult to break than the red and white dogs.*





**This is a portrait is of Elizabeth Gray's red Setter "Ranger" in 1797  
Note the white marking referred to later in this text**

*It is to be observed that neither Mr. Mahon nor Mr. Bennett ever exhibited setters, but used them solely for work. I myself shot over a dog and bitch, Beau and Belle, the property of Mr. Darby, of Leap Castle, Roscrea which he obtained from Judge O'Connor Morris, a descendant of Maurice Nugent O'Connor (before mentioned) and both these were dark red with black noses, but with, to my eyes a strong suspicion of a Gordon or other cross as their coats were too deep in colour, and were, moreover, inclined to be broken, not silky and fine as they should be.*

*I next consulted **Mr. John G.King** of Ballylin, King's County, who may be fairly looked upon as the father of the breed in this country (Ireland). He has been a constant attendant and exhibitor at dog shows, not alone of setters, but of pointers and foxhounds. He is still as keen as possible, notwithstanding that he paid for his first game licence in 1837 and his experience is golden, for not only does he remember clearly the dogs of the past, but he can recollect the names of winners at dog shows, to what he calls recent years, from the show in the Rotunda Gardens, Dublin, about 1863 down to the last field trials in Cookstown.*

*At the Rotunda show he pointed out that there were numbers of the red and white setters exhibited. Although Mr. King keeps a note book in which he, from time to time, jotted down names of dogs and incidents connected with*

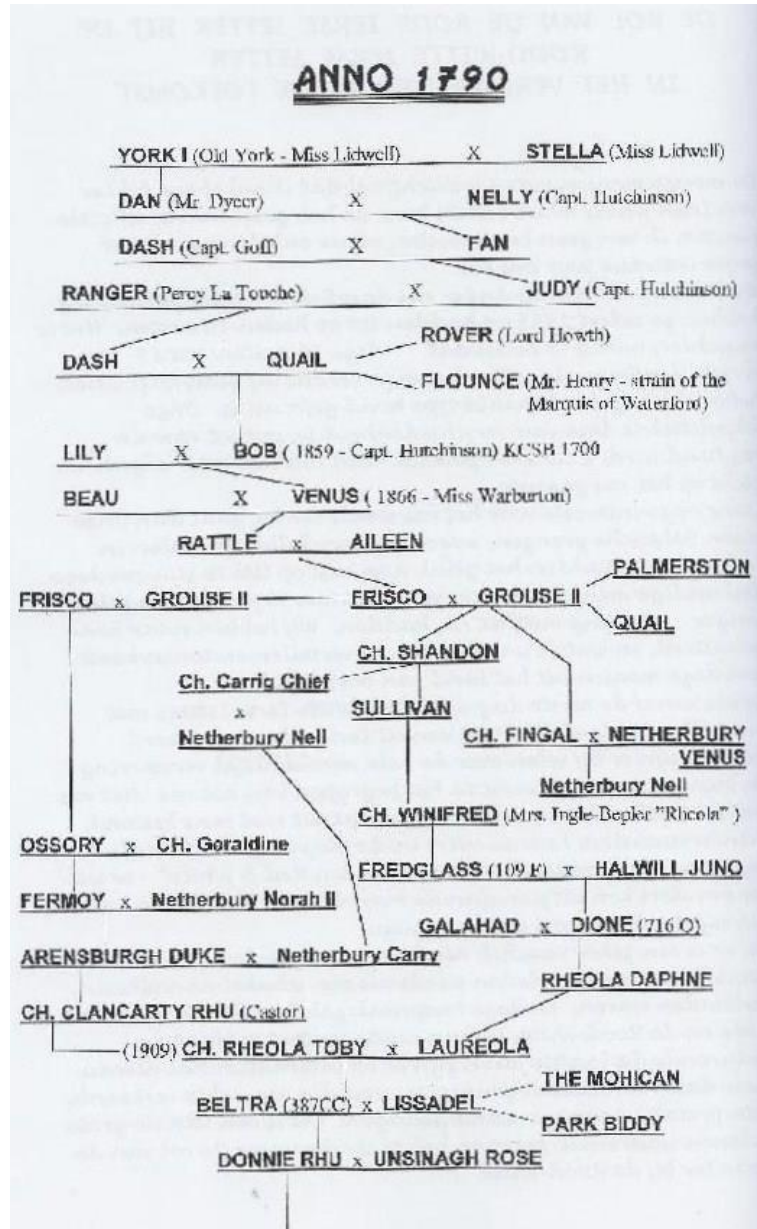
*them, he seldom has to refresh his memory of either the owner, breeder, or dog and he firmly adheres to the assertion that the entirely red coloured dog was not only in the minority, but difficult to obtain at all. He quotes an instance of a gamekeeper from Roscommon, from whom he was in the habit of purchasing dogs, bringing him a red dog and urging him to purchase it because of its rarity. He gives the palm to the O'Connor strain as having been selected with the most care, and kept for years pure from extraneous crosses. In confirmation of his assertion that the red and white were in former years, the favoured breed, he refers to a picture at Sharavogue, the seat of the late Earl of Huntingdon, who married the only daughter of the late Colonel Westenra (the owner of the famous racehorse "Freeny") representing Lord Rossmore, the ancestor of the Westenra family and an enthusiastic sportsman, shooting over three or four setters. Only one of these is whole coloured, and this dog is a pale golden red, with a white snip on the forehead, all the others are red and white.*



**Lord Rossmore and his brother Jack shooting over Irish Red & White and Irish Red Setters in 1812 painted by artist Nick Waters**

*Amongst noted breeders in the past Mr. King quotes Mr. La Touche, of Harristown, who had the O'Connor strain, Mr. Dunne, of Brittas, Mr. Samuel Handy, of Parsonstown, Miss Lidwell, Lord Howth, Lord Waterford, Mr. Trumble, of Malahide, Dublin, and Mr. Reeves, of Dublin. Mr. King when only verging on manhood as a Trinity College student was even then a sportsman, and can recall Dycer's red dog Don (the reputed father of Captain Hutchinson's famous Bob) and often sought the Repository for the purpose of a ramble with old Don. Miss Lidwell (or Ledwich, as she was sometimes*

erroneously called) had the reputation for keeping good dogs, and Mr. King on a visit to her cottage, near Beggar's Bush Barrack, Dublin, saw the then crack Pluto, a red and white. The lady had shortly before been interviewed by the late Mr. Edward Laverack, who wished to take her dog to England to cross with his strain, but the lady was obdurate, even indignant, and refused to lend or sell her favourite.



This pedigree of Anno born in 1790 surfaced at an International Irish Red & White Setter Conference in recent years and dates back to the Red & Whites of Miss Lidwell and moves through the transition period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early Red Setters. Many of the prominent early Irish Red Setters follow as the pedigree continues to the Rev. O'Callaghan's breeding of "Grouse II" and onward to Mrs. Ingle Bepler's Rheola bitch "Winifred" born in 1895 the last of the Rev O'Callaghan's breeding. It was Ingle Bepler who imported Ch. Clancarty Rhu (b. 1901) from Holland as he was inbred to O'Callaghan Setters and to A. Taylor (Dorset) Netherburys



*Of later breeders, Mr. King is equally familiar, and can recall the faults and perfections of champion Palmerston, Miss Warburton's Lilly, Mr. Giltrap's Garryowen, Mr. Nuttall's Maybe and LooVII ; Captain Milner's Frisco; and at one of the last Ballsbridge shows he was interest in the awards as the youngest exhibitor. He disagrees with Mr. Bennett as to the colour of the O'Connor breed, as he maintains they were red and white. He confines his observations to those localities with which he personally was acquainted, as these did not extend either to the bleak north, or the wilds of Kerry, he cannot say that the red setter may not, in these favoured districts, have existed in considerable numbers.*

*Now it has often been mooted, and always met with a most decided opposition from the Irish Red Setter Club (Dublin) that a class should be given for the red and white dogs, and surely if they are more easily broken than the whole coloured dogs and more easily seen on mountain or moor, it would not be a step in the wrong direction to try and resuscitate so valuable a strain. There must be many specimens still existing when so comparatively recently as the Rotunda show, before referred to, several red and white were exhibited on the benches. There is another point worth observing and that is the red dogs of the past and even those shown at the earlier shows were not nearly so deep in colour as many now before the public on the benches. The Irish Red Setter Club's own rules state that the correct colour is "a rich golden chestnut". How many of the colour do we now see winning at our leading dog shows?*

*My next informant (says Mr. Bennett) was **Mr. Cecil Moore**, the breeder, of champion Palmerston , Kate (afterwards Mr. Perrin's) and numerous other celebrities. This gentleman is from country Tyrone, and informs me that in that locality the red dog was the favourite, and numbers of them were to be found in the possession of sportsmen about the town of Omagh, and as he has turned "the three score and ten years allowed to man," and is a good shot, and kept dogs of the right sort, his opinion is valuable.*

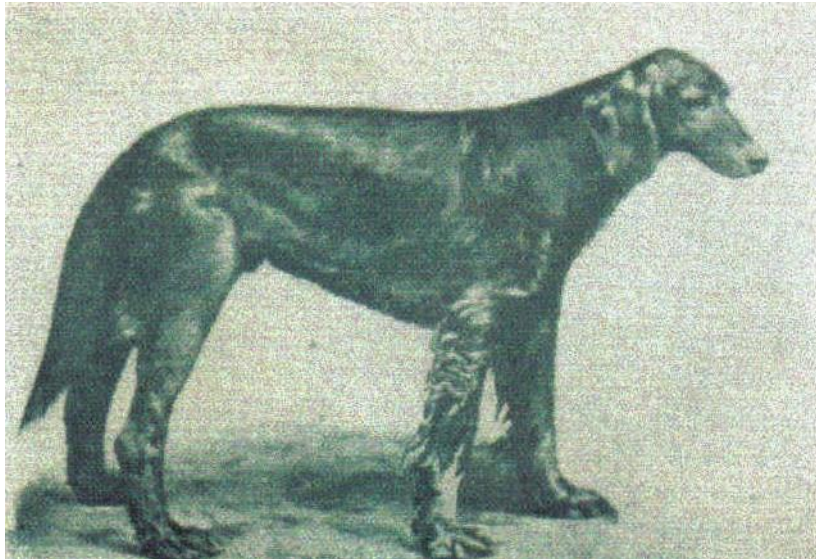
*That the red and white were in existence he freely admits, but that they were Irish setters at all he denies, as he holds to the opinion that they were imported from England, and were a distinct breed. Amongst breeders of the pure red sort he mentions Mr. Jason Hazzard, of Timaskea County Fermanagh, who, so far back as the year 1812 kept nothing but whole coloured specimens. The Earl of Enniskillen, grandfather of the present Earl, about the same period had a different strain of the red colour, on which he set great value. Between these gentlemen a friendly rivalry existed, and both evidently admired each other's breed, as they eventually bred their favourites together, a red bitch, the property of the commoner visiting a dog of the Earl's.*

*Mention may also be made of Mr. Evans, of Dungannon (land agent to Lord Ranfurley) who had a kennel of red Irish setters and kept no others. Mr. Moore relates a curious instance of a purebred red bitch, which he used to*



*one of the red and white variety, and which, when mated with whole coloured dogs, in every subsequent litter threw a pup or two of similar marking to the first cross.*

*Mr. Moore seldom exhibited his setters in the early days of dog shows, preferring them for their working qualities alone, and the famous old champion Palmerston had a narrow escape of being lost to the admiring gaze of the public. Mr. Moore, finding him rather a delicate dog for field work (though most persevering and with an excellent nose), ordered his man to drown him, as he did not wish to give him to anyone who would use him for shooting purposes, as he had then passed his prime. The late Mr. Hilliard met the poor old dog on the way to what was expected to be his watery grave and begged him from Mr. Moore. The dog was given him conditionally that Mr. Hilliard would keep him for show purposes alone. The result is known to most of my6 readers.*



**The great Palmerston, the early lynch-pin of the solid red showbench Irish Setters, albeit that he had a thin white line on his head known as the “Palmerston Snip”. He was sired by Old Shot out of Moore’s Kate. This is the only known photograph of him, taken in old age.**

*It would appear, from Mr. Moore’s remarks, that a white patch on the chest or white on the feet was little regarded, and he has frequently known a patch on the back of the neck appear in the best red setters, and that this is still the fact is well known to breeders. Now, may it not be reasonably asked, is not this some former cross with the red and white variety repeating itself? For, although in self-coloured breeds, such as the black retriever, the black field spaniel, and the Irish terrier, a patch on the chest is but little thought of; while on the toes, and, worse still, on the neck or body, the mark is regarded with much disfavour.*



**“Shot” & Friends 1876 by artist John Emms  
Note” L to R head markings “Palmerston snip” - Blaze - Star  
White chest markings on all particularly the central setter who also  
has white feet**

*The Palmerston strain, as most breeders are aware, frequently had what the late Mr. W. Lort called the “Palmerston snip’ a thin thread of white running down the forehead, and in some of his descendants this amounted to a pretty broad “blaze’ on the forehead.*

*It should be borne in mind that in early days men kept dogs of all breeds for their good working qualities alone, and I think it reasonable to suppose that if an enthusiastic sportsman had a particularly excellent red dog, and his friend and neighbour an equally good red and white bitch, or vice versa, they were pretty certain to breed them together. Be it also remembered that travelling in those days was not the easily accomplished matter it is now, nor were the dogs advertised at stud or for sale to any great extent, if at all. Dog shows were wholly unknown, consequently the dogs of those days were only locally famous.*

*It is somewhat difficult to reconcile the apparent difference in opinions existing between the various gentlemen whose experiences are quoted by me as to whether the original breed was red and white or wholly red. Mr. Mahon, who may be taken to have a good knowledge of the west, and Mr. King, who knew the Midland counties, and as a college youth the vicinity of Dublin, held the opinion that the original breed was red and white, but both admit that the red dog was then existing, but not to any great extent.*

*Mr. Bennett, who knew the Midland counties, and Dublin, holds the opinion that the red and white predominated, but that the red was kept in comparative purity in certain kennels, but believes that there were few, if any men in those days (save Mr. Maurice O'Connor, perhaps), who would not use a red and white if he were a well proved good one in the field. Do not these facts tally with Mr. Moore's assertion that he himself did so on one occasion?*

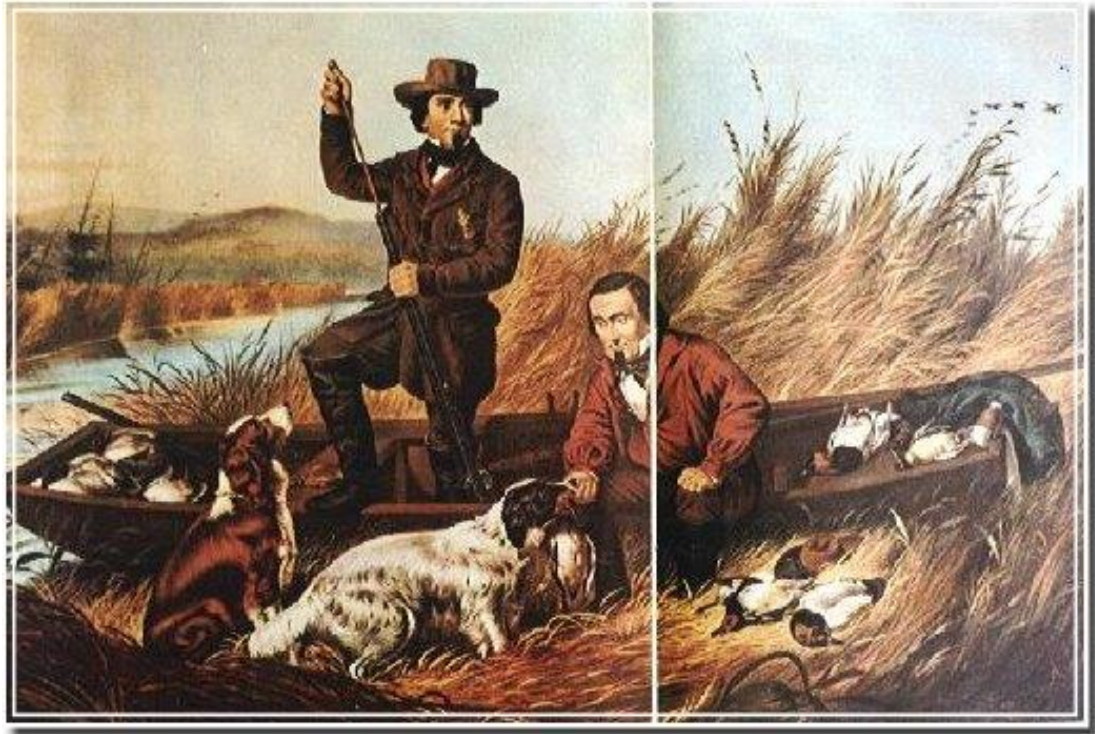


**Rossmore Irish Red & White Setter (R foreground) 1825**

**The Rossmore family of Rossmore Castle, County Monaghan, Ireland had a separate strain of Irish Red and White Setters from the mid 1700's which was preserved into the twentieth century.**

*It is easy to suppose the red dog existed in greater numbers in the north, and the red and white in the midland and western counties, but that the red and white was imported from England in sufficient quantity in those days of slow sailing boats, and with no accommodation for dogs, and the stupendous difficulties to be encountered on stage coaches, etc., to establish a breed of red and white English setters, I think wholly untenable, therefore the natural conclusion appears to be that the red and white Irish setter was the favourite. In certain counties crossed with the red Irish setter when the latter was a good performer, and that the red setter was held in highest esteem in other counties crossed with the red and white, when occasion demanded.*





**Currier's 19<sup>th</sup> century book illustration of two American hunters on the Delaware River (L. Irish Red Setter – R. English Setter)**

*An interesting pamphlet (now, I believe, out of print) was lent me by Mr. Giltrap, secretary of the Irish Red Setter Club, it was published by Dr. Wm. Jarvis, of Claremont, New Hampshire, USA in the year 1879. It purports to contain the pedigree and performance of the two famous setter champions "Elcho" and "Rose". The former dog was born in the year 1874 and after winning a second prize in Dublin found his way to America, where he had numerous successes on the bench, and was the sire of Captain Milner's Ailleen, Berkeley Ben, and Joe Junior and a host of other winners. Rose, bred by Mr. Cecil Moore was born the same year as Elcho and was by champion Palmerston out of Flora and, after winning two prizes in Ireland and one in England, went to Dr. Jarvis's kennels; and the following is an extract from the pamphlet, which is not, I think, without significance on the question of the purity of the breed.*

*"About 1796, the then Earl of Enniskillen, of Florence Court, county of Fermanagh, had a remarkably fine breed of Irish setters and in 1814, he and Mr. Jason Hazzard, of Timaskea, same county, also had an equally fine strain which they crossed. Mr. Jackson Lloyd, of Tamnamore, obtained this breed from Mr. Hazzard, and in 1819, Mr. Robert Evans, of Gostmenon, Dingamore, country of Tyrone, obtained the breed from Mr. Lloyd and crossed it with the then noted strain of Irish red setters possessed by Captain McDonald, husband of the Countess of Antrim. Mr. Evans was a then noted sportsman throughout the north of Ireland, and his Irish setters were famed for their beauty and field qualities. In 1846, Mr. Moore obtained the breed from Mr. Evans, and has since kept it pure".*



There is sufficient evidence in Mr. Bennett's communication to prove that the original Irish setter was red and white and that the fine red race was the rarer of the two. Even among the earlier days of dog shows, few of the best dogs were wholly red and one of the most shapely and successful of them, Dr. Stone's Dash was red and white. But the rage was even then abroad for the whole-coloured dogs, and those who procured them would not look at any other and attacked Dash wherever he won and called him a mongrel.

As a fact, the red and white dog is the more useful, and the wholly red dog's popularity is the result of the show bench. Those who have ever shot on the mountains and bogs of Ireland cannot fail to have noticed the difficulty there is in discerning the red dog when, on a wide range, with a brown heather background, he comes to a point. By no means is it unusual to lose your dog under such circumstances, and if he is not altogether lost and his skeleton found still pointing when the shooter goes that way twelve months later, it is through the good sense of the dog, who would never commit suicide in such conditions. A few years ago at a field trial meeting of the Irish Setter Club held in Country Tyrone, Mr. J.G. Hawkes lost one of his dogs in similar circumstances whilst competing in a trial. An hour or more later one of the keepers found the dog on a stiff point. Had its colour been red and white, such a thing could not have happened. At the same and other meetings the difficulty of distinguishing the red dogs was brought prominently forward when they were running against liver and white or lemon and white pointers or setters, for the latter could be observed with less than half the difficulty it took to discern the native animals.

Nor have I found that birds lie one bit the better to dark coloured dogs than they do to those of a lighter hue. It is often the custom to tie a white handkerchief around the neck of a red setter when he is being shot over, in order that he can be more easily seen.

The Rev. Thomas Pearce ("Ildstone") writing of the Irish red setter twenty years ago, remarked that he would not be surprised were they to become popular. That they have done so there is no doubt.

For many years the Rev J.C. Macdona's Plunket stood alone in his race as the one Irish setter that had ever proved his excellence at Field Trials. This dog, after winning second prize in the aged stake, to Mr. Statter's Bruce, at the National Meeting, Shrewsbury, in 1870 was purchased by Mr. Purcell-Llewelin, who won the prize for setters with him at Vaynol the same year, and other field trials and bench honours subsequently. Plunket was bred by the Hon. D. Plunket, had Captain Hutchinson's Bob for his grandsire, he was a fairly good-looking dog, and perhaps all round no Irish setter that has yet appeared could beat him. But, of course, this is purely a matter of opinion, for it is very difficult indeed to judge of the work of two dogs without seeing them together, especially when there is an interval of about twenty years between him and the best of recent years – Aveline, Drogheda, and some others. In appearance either of the two named would easily have beaten Plunket in the show ring, whatever might have been the result in the field.

When the Irish Setter Club was established in 1882, considerable impetus was given to the red setter, but even before that time he was beginning to make his mark as a good worker at field trials. He had long borne a reputation for being wild and headstrong, and another fault he had was a tendency to put his nose down and hunt the foot scent like a hound rather than seek for it in the wind. This was said to be on account of some remote, may be fabulous, cross, years and years ago with a bloodhound. However, that he was fond of hunting on the ground there is no doubt whatever, any more than there is of his wilfulness and difficulty in breaking. When properly and perfectly trained, the red setter has shown us that no other variety can beat him.

I should conscientiously say that, from what I have observed in his work of late years and I have seen all the best dogs run, that the Irish setter is as dashing, as energetic, as stylish as the best English dog I ever saw. I believe he, as a general rule, will do a long and hard day's work better than any other breed of setter. His stamina is extraordinary. I shall never forget that big, strong dog "Wrestler" (owned by Mr. W. H. Cooper of Derbyshire) that ran at the Irish Trials in 1891. Each morning he followed, or rather preceded, the cars, during the long ten miles' drive to the moors, on his way racing over the fields and enclosures, and indeed, doing an ordinary day's work before his trials commenced, and when he did run his first heat he was even then too wild. No Laverack or Gordon setter would have been allowed to do this, and it must have proved even too much for those untiring liver and white little dogs to which allusion has previously been made in the article on English Setters.

Perhaps after Plunket most attention was attracted to Irish setters by the good work of a bitch called Aveline, belonging to the Rev. R. O'Callaghan, which ran at the Kennel Club meeting in the spring of 1885. She was a handsome bitch, so much so, indeed, as to obtain the cognomen of "beautiful" and as the "beautiful Aveline" she was often known. I recollect how the stake appeared at her mercy, when, unfortunately, a very little rabbit jumped up almost between her legs, and the high couraged bitch, unable to resist the temptation, committed a fault so grave that quite prevented her taking that precedence in the stake her pace, style, and nose, would have entitled her under more favourable circumstances. Later on she won all before her on the showbench, and was not long in attaining her degree as champion.

For many years Mr. O'Callaghan has given considerable attention to the production of the Irish setter in its purity. I have seen his dogs, when properly broken and handled at field trials, do excellent work, and the Kennel Club Stud Books tell how successful they have been in the show ring. There are enthusiasts of the variety who consider this strain usually too dark in colour, too deep in their bright redness, which is indeed a lovely hue. I have a peculiar fondness for this colour so long as it does not show any actual blackness, indicative of Gordon cross, the latter so marked in many of the earlier show dogs – Mr. Jones's Carlo to wit, who did a considerable amount of winning in his day.



**Rev R. O'Callaghan's "Grouse II" as depicted by Vero Shaw for the Illustrated Book of the Dog published in 1890**

Possibly, at some time or another, these red setters were so crossed, Mr. Laverack writes of a red dog he saw at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, which he would much liked to have used to his setters. He found on inquiry that this dog always produced one or more black puppies, and, although he was fast and had a good nose, he was so headstrong that he could not be broken. I fancy some of our modern skilled trainers would soon have brought him to his senses.

Richardson, who said little of the Irish setter, says he is perhaps the purest of all setters, and that his colour is "*yellowish red*". Writing fifty years since, he remarks, such dogs "*are the genuine unmixed descendants of the original land spaniel, and so highly valued are they, that a hundred pounds is by no means an unusual price for a single dog*" This was a very unusual price for such a dog, fifty years or so ago when Richardson wrote, but another authority on the breed, who flourished rather before this period, says that so valued were some strains of the Irish setters that on one occasion an estate was given for a brace of dogs. We are afraid that there are at the present time in the unfortunate Emerald Isle certain estates that would be dear at the price of one of our best dogs.

It may be right to allude to Youatt's opinion as to the colour of Irish setters when he wrote about 1845. He says they are "*either very red, or red and white, or lemon coloured, or white patched with deep chestnut; and it was*

*necessary for them to have a black nose and a black roof to their mouth.”*

The same writer tells us that an Irish setter will obtain a higher price than an English or Scotch one, *“fifty guineas being no unusual sum for a brace, and even two hundred guineas has been given”*. It is just as well to make these quotations here, as they will remind a modern and a future generation that the Irish setter had a reputation of its own before it came to be re-popularised by working at Field Trials and its appearance in the show ring.

How the variety has been re-popularised during the past few years, may be judged from the fact that at the first Birmingham (England) show, held in 1860 there were but four entries in the bitch class, and these so little deserving that no prize was awarded. At the same exhibition, in 1891, there were something like eighteen red setter bitches in competition and, of course, the classes for them are much better filled at the exhibitions held in Dublin, Cork, Belfast, and other large towns in their native country. When the Kennel Club Stud Book was published in 1874, the Irish were the only variety of setter grouped dogs and bitches together. Matters have changed since that time, and the red dogs now get their due.

One of the handsomest Irish setters following immediately after Dr. Stone's Dash was Mr. Hilliard's Count, a most typical specimen, lovely in colour, which was not too dark, but just dark enough. Then there was Mr. Giltrap's Garryowen, who, in his day, had been considered almost invincible. Mr. Cecil Moore's Old Kate, who did a considerable amount of winning between 1878 and 1882, when she was the property of Mr. Abbot and others, was certainly one of the best bitches I ever saw, and Mr. Hilliard's Palmerston, an immense dog, 64lbs in weight, and with an abnormally long and narrow head, monopolised the leading prizes at most of the best shows about this date.

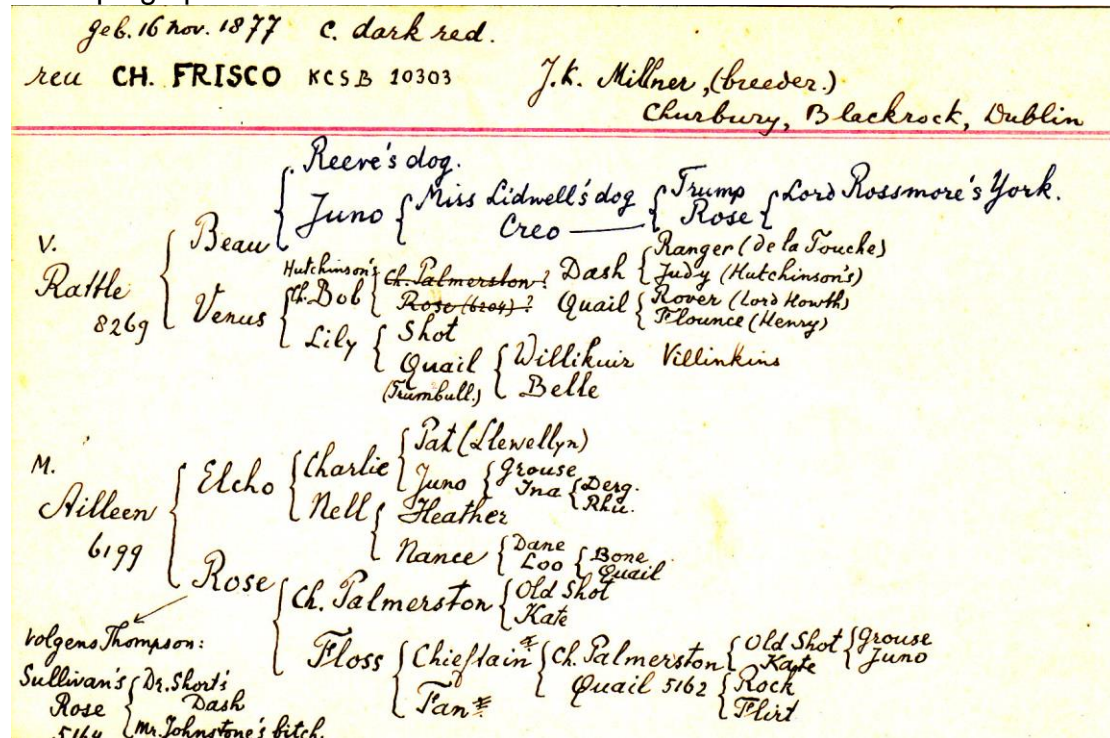


**Mr. J. Giltrap's Ch. Garryowen was sired by Palmerston out of Belle and born on 01.10.1876. He had a spectacularly successful career in the field and on the show bench winning thirty-four major awards which are reflected by his ornate collar festooned with winner's medallions. He became a celebrity when G. Spillane Tobacco Co., Ltd Limerick made his image their trademark and named their factory The House of Garryowen.**

Although such men as Mr. Hilliard, of Dublin; Mr. Waterhouse, Killiney; Mr. Giltrap, Dublin; Captain Milner, Booterstown, Dublin; Mr. McGoff, Tralee; Mr. L.F. Perrin, Kingstown; Mr. J.G. Hawkes, Kenmare; Mr. Grattan Bellow, Enniskerry, Mr. AE Falkiner Nuttal, of co, Sligo; and other Irish families have



latterly done much to give the variety its present popularity, more has been done in a similar manner by breeders this side of the water (in England) for the Rev. R. O'Callaghan, R.N., Wickham Market, Mr. C.C. Ellis, Suffolk, Mr. H.M. Wilson, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, Mr. W.H. Cooper, Ashbourne, Mr. A. Taylor, BA., Beaminster, Dorset; Major Jameson, Ashbourne; Mr. A.E. Taylor, Cheadle (there are others likewise) have proved thorough enthusiasts in keeping up the strain.



Captain Milner has been very successful with his dogs, both on the bench and in the field; his Frisco, who died so recently as November, 1892, was certainly one of the crack dogs of the day, as his red puppy Airnie was one of the best youngsters of the Trial season during 1892. She won first honours at the Kennel Club, at the National trials, and at the Irish trials, and could not be deemed lucky in so doing. Airnie was one of the most careful and steady Irish setters I ever saw, and although she could go fast enough when so inclined, in a great measure lacked that dash and fire usually found in her strain. Her kennel companion, Spalpeen, has likewise performed well and steadily in public trials, and is also an exceeding steady dog. It may be mentioned here as somewhat extraordinary that at the Kennel Club trials, when Airnie won, the whole of the winning setters in the puppy stakes were Irish setters.

Mr. O'Callaghan's Aveline we have alluded to, and his bitch Coleraine, in 1891, created quite a sensation by the brilliant manner in which she ran through the puppy stakes at both the National and Kennel Club trials, and was placed third in the open, competition at the latter meeting. She had greater style and dash than either of the dogs that ran so well for Mr. Milner, and I fancy could have beaten both of them. She went to America. McGoff's Mac's Little Nell, born in 1884 and purchased by Mr. Ellis was one of the most wonderful little setters I ever saw, though she could barely be 40lbs in weight.

She went as fast as the big ones, had an excellent nose, and dropped on scent instantaneously, in her day no one would have been surprised to have seen her beat anything that she was ever put down against. Her field trial successes when she died in the winter of 1892, had been greater than those of any other Irish setter.



**“Going North” leaving on the steam train from Kings Cross Station, London. This painting shows game bird shooting parties departing for the north of England with their Setters and Pointers in 1893.**



**“Going South” depicts a stationary steam train as travellers begin to load their belongings. Waiting with their owners and keepers are Setters, Pointers and strangely in this scene of game-bird gundogs a tri-coloured Rough Collie (extreme RH side). This masterpiece and the above “Going North” were commissioned by Sir Andrew Barclay Walker and painted by artist George Earl in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century**



Mr. Perrin's dogs, although fair performers at the trials, excelled more on the show bench, his Hector, Kate, and Wee Kate being cracks in their line. Similar remarks apply to the Killineys of Mr. Waterhouse, and to the several dogs Mr. Giltrap, the popular secretary of the Irish Setter Club has from time to time owned and still owns.



**Ch. Harmony was born on 29.09.1892 sired by Hector out of Perrin's Sweet Melody and was considered the best bitch produced by Perrin's kennel. The above was originally printed in a leaflet on Irish Setters published by The Exhibitors Supply Association which was subsequently re-published as part of the Kennel Encyclopedia (1910) Col. T.A. Baldwin records "*Taken all round I have seen more high class Irish Setters from Mr. Perrin's kennel than from any other in Ireland.*"**

At Glengariff, Kenmare, Mr. J.G. Hawkes spends his leisure in training his dogs, several of which have run successfully at the Irish trials. His Blue Rock, first prize at Birmingham in 1890, and such animals as Signal, Muskerry, Miss Signal, are quite as good dogs as any man might be proud of owning. Muskerry, the sire of most of Mr. Hawkes' dogs and other winners, I have not seen, but am told he is a valuable and handsome animal, and has shown extraordinary stamina, though on several occasions he has been terribly hard run. Mrs. Bellow has a large and valued kennel at Tenchurch, Enniskerry, and her Susi, who won in the bitch class, at Curzon Hall in 1890, is a particularly good specimen. Mr. W.W. Despard, Rathmoyle, Queen's County, has at times shown some excellent dogs, and an omission would be caused were no mention made of the many Irish setters that Mr. W.H. Lipscombe has so often brought from Dublin to compete at our English trials, though they may have not met with that amount of success such enterprise deserved. Mr. Falkiner Nuttall, of Cullinamore, co Sligo, has for years had many good dogs, of which perhaps Loo VII was his best.

Mr. O'Callaghan's success with the "beautiful Aveline" has already been noted, and not inferior to her was his Coleraine, a bitch previously alluded to. On the bench, too, this kennel is often at the big shows seen pitted against

that of Mr. Ellis for supremacy, and victory is sometimes one way, and sometimes another. But such dogs as Fingal, Shadon III, Finglass, and Geraldine, are good enough whether beaten or not; and Mr. Ellis's Drogheda, and his Dartrey, Rossmore, Tarbat, etc., formed, perhaps, as fine a team of red setters as ever stood a grouse. The first named was an unlucky dog in the trials, making some serious mistake or other, either through his own fault or his handler's, just as he appeared to be winning the chief prize. By show goes Mr. H.M. Wilson's Nellie will long be remembered for her successes on the bench, a bitch whose beauty we have brought to our recollection by an excellent portrait of her by the great animal painter Basil Bradley.



**Ch. Winifred (Ch. Sullivan x Eme) b. 1895 - one of the last bred by Rev R.O'Callaghan, She was owned by Mrs.Ingle Bepler's Rheola kennel of solid reds in Tottenham England which were highly influential and successful in the show ring in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

Mr. W.H. Cooper, at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, (England) has for some time had, perhaps, a larger kennel of Irish setters than anyone else, and their excellences have been known both on the bench and in the field. The names of his Wrestler, Finnigan's Wake, Sure Death, Vicar and Woodbine, will, we fancy be found in future pedigrees where a combination of the "best blue blood" is desired; for such will ensure that its possessors can gallop and stay with any dog pitted against them during the most arduous field trial work imaginable. At the Irish trials at Omagh, in 1889, there were a number of extraordinary dogs running, amongst them Henmore Sure Death, and Woodbine (bred by Mr. Hawkes), fast and brilliant in the extreme. The former made a unique performance by winning both the puppy stake and the all-aged stake, the latter including all varieties of setters and pointers, and she was second, too, in the Open puppy stake, beaten by Mr. Lonsdale's Ightfield Rosa. She also, if I mistake not, was third with Woodbine in the braces. Such a performance as this over a rough country, at once stamps the excellence of



the strain from which she comes. Other good dogs of Mr. Cooper's were winning at the Irish trials in the autumn of 1892. Here his kennel performed unusually well, Clonsilla, a smart bitch, especially distinguishing herself.

Mr. Taylor's (Dorset) dogs, though successful on the bench, have not yet been tried in public on the mountains, nor have those of his namesake Mr. E. E. Taylor, of Cheadle, neither have I seen Major, Jameson's great bench dog Ponto, or his kennel companion Drenagh anywhere but in the show ring, where they appear to be pretty nearly as good as they can be.

In what I have written an endeavour has been made to do justice to a handsome and valuable variety of the dog, which from some cause or other, did not receive its due during a certain era, say from about 1840 to 1880. The development of field trials, the spirited and concerted action of several of his admirers, and the formation of the Red Setter Club (Dublin) have, however, wrought a change, and naturally an improvement in the dog both in work and appearance.



**Thomas Blinks (1860-1912) artist of this portrait of an Irish Red Setter (with white markings) and an English Setter in Scotland**

At the present time there are more good show specimens extant than at any previous period in their history, and in work the Irish setter is steadier and better than he was once upon a time. This, no doubt, arises from the greater pains taken in his breaking, moreover, most of the best modern dogs are produced from animals whose ancestors for two or three generations have been highly trained. This continued for a few years longer, and, may be, the

red setter will be the shooting dog of the future. He is fortunate in having so many enthusiasts to work for his good, and, so long as they breed for a combination of working capabilities and good looks, abstaining at the same time from introducing strains other than so far pure and tried ones, we may look for a continued improvement in this favoured dog.

I have said that, for work on the moors and mountains, a red and white dog is better than the deep, bright red, which is difficult to discern amid the brown heather on the hillside. But if the breeders like the whole colour, let them stick to it by all means, and allow their failing sight to be assisted by tying a white handkerchief around the neck of their dog, for something of the kind is certainly required. And the shooting man who has a wide expanse of moor upon which birds are scarce and require a great deal of finding, and the walking is arduous, can have no better dog for the purpose than a properly trained and staunch red setter. Such a one will work hard all day and not give up in disgust about noon because he has failed to locate more than an odd bird or so. Shortly, the red setter appears to me to be the most persevering of all sporting dogs used with the gun.



**Artist Thomas Blinks (1853 -1912) portrait of two Irish Red Setters with an Irish Red & White Setter**

His points and description, as issued by the Dublin Irish Red Setter Club (the original breed standard for the Irish Red Setter 1886) are as follows:-

*Head* –Should be long and lean. The skull oval (from ear to ear), having plenty of brain room, and with well-defined occipital protuberance. Brows raised, sowing stop. The muzzle moderately deep, and fairly square at end. From the stop to the point of the nose should be long, the nostrils wide, and the jaws of nearly equal length, flews not to be pendulous. The colour of the nose dark mahogany or dark walnut, and that of the eyes (which ought not to be too large) rich hazel or brown. The ears to be of moderate size, fine in texture, set on low, well back, and hanging in a neat fold close to the head.

*Neck-* Should be moderately long, very muscular, but not too thick, slightly arched, free from all tendency to throatiness

*Body-* Should be long-shoulders fine at the points, deep, and sloping well back. The chest as deep as possible, rather narrow in front. The ribs well sprung, leaving plenty of lung room. Loins muscular, and slightly arched. The hindquarters wide and powerful.

*Legs and Feet –* The hind legs from hip to hock should be long and muscular, from hock to heel, short and strong. The stifle and hock joints well bent, and not inclined either in or out. The forelegs should be straight and sinewy, having plenty of bone, with elbows free, well let down, and, like the hocks, not inclined either out or in. The feet small, very firm, toes strong, close together and arched.

*Tail-* Should be of moderate length, set on rather low, strong at root, and tapering to a fine point, to be carried in a scimitar-like curve on a level with or below the back.

*Coat-* One the head, front of legs, and tips of ears, should be short and fine, but on all other parts of the body and legs it ought to be of moderate length, flat, and as free as possible from curl or wave.

*Feathering-* The feather on the upper portion of the ears should be long and silky; on the back of fore and hind legs long and fine, a fair amount of hair on the belly, forming a nice fringe, which may extend on chest and throat. Feet to be well feathered between the toes. Tail to have a nice fringe of moderately long hair, decreasing in length as it approaches the point. All feathering is to be as straight and as flat as possible.

*Colour and Markings-* The colour should be a rich golden chestnut, with no trace whatever of black, white on chest, throat, or toes, or a small star on the forehead, or a narrow streak or blaze on the nose or face not to disqualify.”

	Points value		Points value
Head	10	Tail	4
Eyes and ears	10	Coat and feather	10
Neck	1	Colour	8
Body	20	Size, style and general appearance	14
Hindlegs and feet	10		
Forelegs and feet.	10		
	<hr/> 64		<hr/> 36
<b>GRAND TOTAL 100 POINTS</b>			





**This black and white print accompanied Mr. Rawson Lee's text and is from an original painting by Arthur Wardle in 1896 entitled "Brace of Setters on the moor."**