

## Emergence of the Red Setter By Bill Cargo



**Bill Cargo and Pepper**

The NATIONAL RED SETTER FIELD TRIAL CLUB was organized in late 1951. Accounts vary somewhat, but W.E. LeGrande states that the idea was "hatched" in Rusty Baynard Mobil station in Dover, Delaware. It was organized for the purpose of returning the Irish setter to the field. All of its supporters accepted this tenet. There would never be a 100% agreement on just exactly to what the "IDEAL" Red setter should conform. To some, a good foot hunting shooting dog would be desired. To others, Baynard, LeGrande, Church and David, to name a few, the Red setter was to be a field trial dog with range, style, bird sense, run, and intensity in sufficient quantity, that he could be a serious competitor in pointer and setter trials. Amongst field trialers, agreement still was unanimous. Baynard for example leaned toward the wide going all age, while LeGrande and Church looked for a field trial shooting dog with accent on style. It is a credit to the founders that their personal favorite would always be subdued to the overriding principle, "Return the Irish setter to the field". Yet today the same divergent viewpoints exist, but never have they been seriously contested, and never has the club been seriously split over this issue. Why? Because the middle ground was chosen for the standard and those who chose to breed to either side of it were still valued members returning the red dog to the field as they saw it.

This organization was something that Mr. Nesbitt did not foresee in 1915. He thought of Red setter improvement in terms of the dedicated individual. These did come along, not before 1950. Unfortunately, the individual was limited by his own life span or the life span of his interest. The individual was also limited to breeding to his own

dogs, for he didn't need to breed too long to have the best Irish around. This would make breeding improvement a slow process, and gains once made would be quickly dissipated once the individual, for whatever reason, ceased his effort. Without publicity, it would be pretty well left to chance; if field bred setters would pass from one breeder to the next.

So the NRSFTC would serve a novel purpose not conceived of by Mr. Nesbitt. It would provide the necessary continuity to a breeding program that would be beyond the capability of one man to achieve. Through the efforts of many, it would place the new Red setter in all corners of the country, giving the effort this time, something never before achieved: Permanence. It would attempt something untried by any pointer-setter club. Broad based education of its members. Field trials were instituted; not a new idea, but the club publication "The Flushing Whip" would become a many-pronged educational device. It would inform with training, care, and breeding articles. It would inform as to who was winning, with what dogs, and this device would whet the appetite of the novice to do likewise and the veteran to do better. And once the novice caught the "bug", he would know the dogs he needed to use to breed the dogs he needed to win. The club would employ publicity as a tactical weapon designed to attract new members. Publicity on a scale never before attempted by any breed club with articles in nationally read magazines coast to coast. Yes, it was a brilliant concept "hatched" in that Mobil station. So much would he achieve, and this time it would not be lost.

We've been talking of the vehicle put together to see the project through, but let's not forget the project itself. The Red dog. The National Red Setter Field Trial Club owes its existence to Horace Lytle. It was on his "cross breeding" idea that the NRSFTC would be founded. Without that article "The Irish Setter in the Field" it is unlikely that sufficient shocking force would have otherwise been generated to do the job. Mr. Lytle was the Red Setter's Thomas Paine. Mr. Lytle's article, however did not supply the hope and desire. The Red setter's "Lexington" was Rufus McTybe'O'Cloister's win. This win fulfilled the two needs. First, it demonstrated that the Irish setter's cause was not hopeless. Second, it aroused the competitive spirit to better this mark by one notch.

We can read of three viewpoints of the founding of the NRSFTC and the breeding of the new Red setter. Herm David, in his racy, stirring manner wrote "The Red Setter Challenge". This article appeared in the October, 1957 Pennsylvania Game News. It was a history, but remember its prime purpose. It was written, not to glorify LeGrande, but to use his accomplishments to incite more recruits to accept the "Challenge". Even its name was suggestive of its purpose, and in its purpose, it was highly successful.