"Henk and I would like to thank everyone for the tremendous world wide research and collection of information that has been catalysed by members of the working-setters list on the "lost tribe" shower of hail, the story of a vanished strain miraculously snatched from obscurity in the final moments of its twelfth hour. After some 150 emails and umpteen dozen faxes and phonecalls to and from the four corners of the world, against a backdrop of purebreeding versus crossbreeding, authenticity versus forgery, against world wars, prejudice and "seek and destroy" hail, FINALLY we find "the vital link" PLUS a chance-in-a-lifetime eye witness, in a jigsaw puzzle as kaleidoscopic as the Internet itself."

Sandy Peter'ka

FRENCH: NORMAN BLOODED, THEIR ANCESTORS WENT FROM FRANCE TO ENGLAND WITH WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR IN THE PERSON OF THEOPHILIUS DE FRENCH. ONE LINE OF DESCENDANTS SETTLED IN COUNTY WEXFORD ABOUT 1300 AD. A CENTURY LATER A BRANCH OF WEXFORD FRENCHES MIGRATED TO GALWAY (1425) WHERE THE FAMILY PROSPERED AND MULTIPLIED, SOON BECOMING ACCEPTED AS THE "TRIBES OF GALWAY" ~ WALTER FRENCH BEING SOVEREIGN OF GALWAY (EQUIVALENT TO MAYOR) IN 1444. A BRANCH OF THIS BRANCH MOVED INTO COUNTY ROSCOMMON, CIRCA 1620, AND BECAME THE FRENCHES OF FRENCH PARK.

EDWARD MAC LYSAGHT
"Irish families. Their names, Arms and Origins"
1978

Note the de Freyne family at French Park in County Leitrim!

Irish Setter families on a map of north-west Ireland, hand drawn by Jan Hesterman in Holland in the 1930's and now resting in the home archives of Henk ten Klooster.

the elusive SHOWER OF HAIL

Where mist meets mountain and moor, Henk ten Klooster contemplates the wealth of Irish history still embedded in its people.

Hartsbourne Flame by the Dutch Baroness

LOST TRIBE...

A blurry grey image etches history on the film of a travelling camera in the 1940's. The Dutch Baroness, on holiday in England, is fascinated by a red setter with small white spots scattered through her coat. She is a rare find, brought in from Ireland after the War as the survivor of a lost tribe of Irish Setters, the elusive "Shower of Hail". The dog's name is Hartsbourne Flame.

As the decades pass, the picture becomes tattered, passing from hand to hand until finally it nestles deep in the home files of breed researcher Henk ten Klooster in the village of Broekland. Meanwhile Hartsbourne Flame becomes a memorable name in Irish Setter archives, not only for her rare shower of hail, but as the dam of Show Champion *Hartsbourne Tobias*. He emerges one of the breed's most influential sires in England, and lives to see his name on show-bred pedigrees all over the world.

In 1998 Henk travels with me to Ireland and during a meeting with Jim Sheridan the history of white in the Irish Setter breed is closely reviewed. The first Irish Setters were white dogs patched with clear islands of red but there were always variations. Some were mostly white, others were mostly red, some Reds had flashes of white at the front, and some were solid red all over. *"What about the shower of hail?"* asks Henk and Jim smiles. He has one right here in his back yard!

SHEANTULLAGH SHOWER

Jim brings out a golden chestnut to see us. She has a white flash on the forehead, a white strip between her eyes, white on her muzzle and a white chin. Her chest, toes and the tip of her tail are white, there is red mottling in the spread of white on her flews and a close look at her coat reveals a scatter of white traces, each only a few hairs, almost melted throughout.

She is a special dog indeed, bred in the kennels of Raymond O'Dwyer, her red blood flows from native soil, from ages beyond recorded times.

Henk is fascinated, "Are we putting our hands the last mohican of a lost tribe?" he asks. I try to capture the image on film but half a century forward from the Dutch Baroness, modern technology will not help this one today! Irish sunshine bursts through Delgany rainclouds, the picture is floodlit and the fine white hairs can hardly be seen. Soft uniform lighting and a special close-up lens may do it, but certainly not a regular shot at a regular distance on a regular colour film. This almost invisible sprinkling of hail forecasts a new climate for debate in ghusty days to come!

WORDS SURVIVE WORLDS

Henk returns to Holland and the search begins. Is the Sheantullagh an *authentic* shower of hail? How many faint showers were never caught on film? Piles of dusty boxes are spread across the floor. Can we *define* the shower? How old are the *oldest* descriptions and how far back are the earliest sightings? Is the shower indeed a *pure* Irish Setter strain?

Henk finds the handwritten notes of Jan Hesterman from the 1930's. The faded ink is hard to distinguish but Henk translates *"A.F. Nuttall once used a de Freyne-dog, red with a few white hairs, wholly speckled through the coat".* As founder of the famous Dutch O'Cuchulain prefix, Hesterman was an expert on pedigrees and breed history, accessing the most reliable sources of the day. Henk notes the "shower of hail" was not worded, we estimate the Nuttall scene took place about a 120 years ago and that the source was probably Millner himself, one of the founders of The Irish Red Setter Club in 1882.

In the 1980's the late English historian Gilbert Leighton-Boyce reports the same event in his Survey of Early Setters: *"...breeder Aeneas Falkiner Nuttall informed Millner that he had bred from one and it had a "shower of hail" through its coat. ... it is a fact that this curious marking (small white spots scattered sparsely and irregularly all over the body coat) has occurred now and then down to the present day".*

Back to Hesterman's time in the 1930's we find the book entitled Setters by Mrs Ingle-Bepler. She writes: *"I am indebted to my friend Mr T.M. Quinn, of Castlebar, for the description of a handsome strain of Irish setters that used to be seen on the northwest coast of Ireland (Mayo). They were known as "the Shower of Hail Setters" and were quite typical of the breed in all points and in ground colour. But the whole coat was sprinkled with small white dots, about half to one inch apart, as if a shower of hail had fallen on the dog and had not melted. The spots were fairly uniform in size - about as big as a pea, and evenly distributed all over the dog. These setters were good workers, and most attractive in appearance. It would be interesting to know if any of this strain still exist."*

***Eve Gardner's new book** publishes a picture of Hartbourne Flame in October 1998. The shower of hail has fascinated historians for more than a century but the only photos in existence and the only named shower pedigree belong to Hartsbourne Flame, whose image took 50 years to make publication!*

Ingle-Bepler's sources were also sound. Her co-author C W Ryan lived in the northwest Ireland, in Quinn's region. Quinn himself bred the Irish Setter *Beltra* who flowed into key dogs on the best pedigrees of the 1930's.

Henk locates the de Freyne family on Hesterman's hand-drawn maps of Ireland. Yes! They too lived in the northwest! Henk notes the showers were defined as a few white hairs, speckles, dots and spots. The markings were irregular or regular, they appeared on dogs typically Irish in looks and work, and by the 1930's the survival of the shower was already in doubt.

WORLD INTEREST

In September Henk flies the Baroness' picture on the Internet and fans of Patu's working-setters list spring into action. In the *USA* Jean Plummer and Dr Mary Whitely work on American field history and link it to Ireland, Allen Fazenbaker uploads news to his webpage, Aileen Frazier researches the show-bred descendants of American imported Hartsbourne and Donna Barnett posts news to the K9 genetics List.

In *England* Julia Bateman follows a recent shower birth from red parentage, Eve Gardner's new book publishes a picture of Hartbourne Flame in October and Henk's calls to Sybil Lennox relate Hartsbourne history.

Ireland by telephone taps the knowledge of Ray O'Dwyer, Jim Sheridan and Laura Dunne. In *Australia* Myra Thomas-Rhodes researches a shower puppy from the 1970's, in *Europe* Alenka Pokorn, Gerard Mirck and Rembrandt Kersten join the drive and *New Zealanders* Liz and Gary Doyle relate their earliest sightings from the Kiwi isle.

Sherlock-Henk shakes his head in disbelief ~ the shower of hail has fascinated historians for more than a century but the *only* photos in existence and the only *named* shower pedigree belong to Hartsbourne Flame, whose image took 50 years to make publication! "What's going on here?!!"

EARLY SHOWERS

With reliable sources on Quinn and Nuttall describing the Irish showers of previous centuries, Henk turns his attention to old British newspapers publishing discussions on the breed. He tracks them clipping by clipping, month by month, year by year from 1929 to 1962.

The illustrious kennel name of *Menaifron* rises from an avalanche of text. These were Irish of great notoriety, rich in the best Red culture of Ireland and bred by Mrs Marion Holt and Mr Edgar Rea of Anglesey England. The Menaifrons won in field and show from the 1920's and supplied foundation blood to the most successful breeders in Ireland and England. Henk searches Menaifron origins and finds them anchored in major breed pathways leading back to Nuttall's famous and influential Irish Setter bitch *Maybe* born 1871, and Quinn's *Beltra,* confirming direct links between English Menaifron and the northwest of Ireland.

Right: The Sheantullagh "shower" resident at Jim Sheridan's Craigrua kennels in Dublin. Scattered through her body coat are fine flecks, each made up of a few white hairs invisible to the lens. White markings on her face, chest, toes and tail show that while she is bred from Red Setters, she carries very old genes linking her to Red and White Setters early in the lineage.

genetically speaking....

Dr Mary Whitely Ph.D
Genesearch LLC
Writer for the website of the Red Setter Club USA, she owns and trials a Red and White Setter.

Some interesting thoughts come to mind, but one major problem in understanding the genetics of all this is the absence of pedigree data. One thing that we can say is that at one time (prior to Breed Clubs and recognition of pure bred dogs by their appearance, not their genes) all the setters were most likely interbred. Only when we as humans started to select for physical characteristics did we limit the genes by our own selection. Whatever was left behind that we no longer saw with our eyes could account for breeding where the different types arise, like in the case of the Gordon setter breeding.

As you know recessive genes can lurk in a population for generations, and never surface until the right combination came together again. I imagine that if you had enough accurate pedigree information for the sire and the dam, that you should be able to account for the puppies. Coat color genetics can involve multiple genes, so you just have to get the right combination. In the case of the Gordons here the red, white and black genes would be on separate chromosomes or they would not appear separately in different dogs.

My opinion of the Irish Setter coat genetics would go like this. From what I understand, the solid reds came from the Red and Whites. The genetic explanation for this is that a both animals have red and white genes, but in the case of the solid reds, a third gene termed a "modifier" of white was mutated in the reds so that they could no longer turn on their white gene. So for the solid Red dogs, they could carry one or two mutated copies of the modifier. If you bred two reds with one good copy of the modifier, and one mutated one you could get both Reds and Red and Whites. As for the "shower of hail dogs", genetically speaking this could be another variation of the white modifier gene, where it's ability to turn off the red pigment in certain cells is reduced, or it could be another gene altogether perhaps from the English. I guess that my question is what would happen if you crossed a shower of hail dog with a Red and White, or is there no pedigree information out there for that? This may resolve some of the questions.

Below: A small section of Hesterman's coloured pedigree circle identifying the various concentrations of breed families. Note the family of Hartsbourne Flame.

In December 1934 J W Heaslip writes in *Our Dogs* on the subject of colour in Irish setters: "Naturally, when I saw a goodly number of dogs exhibited at a recent show with white feet, large strips of white on chest, *and others spotted white all over,* I thought I was entitled to draw attention to the fact that white was objectionable in an Irish setter."

Marion Holt reacts: *"I have had two letters from well known judges agreeing with what I wrote, also one saying that the white is neither a blemish nor a fault, but shows quality, and is a reminder that they did come from red and whites."*

During the lifetime of Marion Holt, W.J.Rasbridge wrote: "In fact, pre-war judges usually accepted white markings on a red setter which were not provided for in the standard and *it was not unusual to see what were known as "Shower of Hail" setters with white fleckings all through their coats winning. The Menaifron kennels exhibited several reds so marked".*

Henk adds "flecks" to his shower word-list of hairs, speckles, dots and spots. More old pedigrees are spread on the floor and Menaifron is seen running strong in the veins of famous Irish prefixes *Derrycarne* and *Moanruad*, and sharing blood with English prefixes *Sulhamstead*, *Rheola* and *Hartsbourne*. Our one legendary shower Hartsbourne Flame was in fact a litter sister to the top winning Irish Champion *Derrycarne Martini,* both also linking to the north west via *Beltra* and *Maybe.*

In 1961 Rasbridge writes again: *"Mrs. Holt showed and won with many Menaifrons with the white flecking on their coats - so called "shower of hail" Setters ... and there has been at least one well known winner since the war which appears in probably 50 per cent of present day pedigrees, which was similarly marked."* Of course he was referring to Hartsbourne Flame!

Alas, nowhere in our vast research can we find one Menaifron shower named! On Mrs Holt's death in 1953 her Menaifron kennel book passed to the late William Rasbridge, one of the most thorough and accurate researchers of Red culture in England. We wonder if Rasbridge's personal heritage as the son of a Welsh father and Irish mother inspired his commitment to the breed, and ask who has the Menaifron kennel book today? Does it record the actual names of the elusive winning showers?!

We flick through a clutter of silver Menaifron pictures, one famous dog after another but no trace of a shower among them! Henk recalls the flecks on the Sheantullagh shower this year, reminding me they didn't show up either! *Flushing Whip* editor *Bob Sprouse* in America mentions the same problem to Jean Plummer, remembering childhood years when his grandfather imported a true-red shower of hail from Ireland. *"You'd be lucky to get a photo at all in those days!!"* he laughs. Henk goes to his encyclopedias and confirms black and white film reached the world in 1884. Image resolution was not good in the old days.

HAIL EVAPORATES

It is easy to look back and see how the shower faded. Many old pure breeds and strains of pure breeds have been lost through the ages. Productive working dogs were stripped of a future when, at the mercy of fads and preferences, their traits couldn't meet the demands of a growing market.

In the 19th Century the quest for solid Red gathered momentum, this was the setter the world wanted. Large white markings as far away as America were seen as blemishes devaluing the popular product and mismarkings suffered the proverbial "seek and destroy". Once The Irish Red Setter Club drew up it's breed standard for the racy Red Setter in1886, white flashes only on the toes, chest, throat and head of a dog could save him from disqualification on the bench. The Irish Red and White Setter standard followed, ruling out flecks on the body. These were the days of refinement in sugar and flour and perhaps, in setter lineage, pure-red was seen as pure-bred! The shower of hail was left in no-man's land, a strain never aristocratic enough to get its face on canvas.

By telephone *Raymond O'Dwyer* talks of the shower in Ireland: "The earliest reference I can find is Rawdon Lee's writings in *Sporting Dogs* magazine at the end of last century", he says, *"Even then the shower of hail was described as a disappearing strain. It was never a part of mainstream Irish breeding".* Ray in his own lifetime has never seen nor heard of the spotted shower in the working gene pool. We discuss definitions of the old shower of hail, Ray has seen plenty of Reds with white hairs through their coats, like the Sheantullagh bitch at Jim's, but he questions whether they are really showers.

Henk telephones *Sybil Lennox* in England, she bought her first Irish Setter in 1946 and took over the Hartbourne prefix when its founder Eileen Walker died in 1970. After Hartsbourne Flame Sybil never saw another shower, despite the pedigrees being bred very close. We conclude that if indeed the shower was a pure strain, it must be genetically very timid. With all the vast inbreeding and linebreeding on Flame all over the world, can we not find a shower *anywhere*?!

Rasbridge's writings in September1961 emphasise the need to penalise mismarkings while recording some tolerance to the shower of hail. We wonder if the showers once had their band of true-believers who have since passed away themselves. *"If judges ignore white markings, which on a correct interpretation of the standard should disqualify, they ought not to be more strict regarding minute black patches. ... Yet I have a feeling that a judge who would turn a blind eye to a 'shower of hail' coat would reject a Setter with any observable black on it."*

Henk insists shower throwbacks may have been bred in distant kennels but culled and never reported for fear of devaluing the lineage. He points to Mrs Ingle-Bepler's book, published at the same time and place as the winning Menaifron showers which were criticised in the press. How odd that Ingle-Bepler should write: *"It would be interesting to know if any of this strain still exist"* when in fact they were right under her nose sharing blood with her very own pedigrees!

Irish Red and White Setters were almost the victims of colour prejudice too, dwindling to catastrophic numbers before the breed was actively restored in Ireland in the 1980's. The birth this year of classic Red and White *Harry* from a solid red working pedigree in Holland proves ancient genes do survive strident vanquishing, rather like the Celts themselves!

Late at night we go back over Ray's and Sybil's words. Henk's emails fly to my screen in aggressive capitals: *"The fine white flecks in Jim's Sheantullagh are sure signs of early showers!"* he yells. My reply shoots back in defiance: *"I can't accept that until I can link the same trait to a known shower of hail!!"*

The atmosphere electrifies, the network broadens and the search is unrelenting...

Mr. EDGAR REA'S Field-Trial and Bench-Winning

IRISH SETTERS,

At Menaifron, Dwyran, Anglesey.

MENAIFRON COUNT O'MOY.

MENAIFRON ROSE.

MENAIFRON SNIPE O'MOY.

CH. JIM O'MOY.

Above: *Foggy with age, these press clippings come from the English newspaper "Our Dogs" in the 1930's. The covetted Menaifrons bred, worked and exhibited shower of hail Irish Setters aswell as solid Reds.*

Right: *Hesterman's 1930's hand written pedigree of Nuttall's influential bitch Maybe born in 1871. It shows the beginnings of recorded lineage into named Irish Setters.*

teef geb. 1871

MAYBE Mr. A.F. Nuttall.

KCSB 4337

Y. Walsh's Chance
- Delaney's Dick
  - Butler's dog
  - Delaney's bitch
- Delaney's Floss
  - Lord Lismore's dog.
  - Delaney's bitch.

M. Nuttall's Mayo
- Corbet's York
  - Capt. Buckley's Dash
  - Corbet's Fan
    - Corbet's Grouse I
    - Kate
- Nuttall's Juno
  - Fox's Setter
  - Corbet's bitch.

HAILSTORMS IN TEACUPS

In June 1997 Henk picked up *Julia Bateman's* post to the Internet saying *"I thought you may be interested that I today visited a litter of Irish Red Setters where one dog puppy had markings on it which I can only describe as "shower of hail". The puppy's back end, tail and back legs were covered in cream coloured patches; the rest of his body was normal Irish red in colour. The Mum and Dad were both ordinary Irish Reds! Has anyone else seen these markings on Irish Red Setters - by the way the puppies were only three weeks old."* Henk contacts Julia again during our research and she reports the hail had disappeared as the puppy matured.

Myra Thomas-Rhodes in Western Australia remembers a litter from the 1970's bred by Joan Peters from old Australian prefixes based on English lineage. Amongst the litter there was one shower of hail but in time his spots also cleared to an orange colour which blended with the coat.

Aileen Frazier reported an American show-bred puppy born in August with a sprinkling of white hairs on his back. Aileen writes *"I'll ask if she has a photo. I have photographed many orange/red roan Cockers - and the white tends to wash out and reflect the light - the color just doesn't photograph well! My friend has told me she expects the white will fade and has described the appearance as small white hairs mixed in with the back-coat"*. The puppy's registered name is Snow in August and Aileen explains how American show lineage is strongly founded, though a long way back, on *Hartsbourne Sallyanne of Tirvelda.*

TWO CLIMATES

New Zealand provides two shower sightings in the 1970's where the hail was tenacious through the lifetime of the dogs, but both cases came from known and deliberate crossbreedings between Red Setters and orange belton English Setters. The first was in Gisborne in the North, producing perfect showers that I saw myself, and the mating was repeated because the showered puppies were so popular.

The second case came from a South Island sheep station, producing a red puppy with hail all over its belly. Such an outstanding example of the Irish Setter breed was he that his admirers encouraged his owner to show him at ribbon parades where entries were taken on the day, not confined to registered dogs and exhibited for the benefit of novice handlers and trainee show judges. This dog's shower of hail belly also held true for the remainder of his life.

One can appreciate the likelihood of this happening in other countries and other decades at any time in history. Certainly after the wars when stock was in short supply and anonymity in pedigrees was tolerated, the motive and opportunity to pass crossbreeds for purebreeds was considerable.

Gilbert Leighton-Boyce reports in his book *Irish Setters* *"...Bloompat appeared mysteriously in England in middle age without a pedigree. He was supposed to have been stolen, perhaps from Ireland. A grand big dog, he was flecked all over with white - the rare 'shower of hail' marking still surviving in some parts of England."* The O'Kilner line of the 1920's started with Bloompat's daughter and showers like Bloompat would have suffered scrutiny ~ authentic showers or convenient forgeries? Doubts would have spread to other showers and developed two climates of opinion.

MOANRUAD ICE

Jean Plummer reports again from the USA where *Bob Sprous* remembers long talks with the late *John Nash* of the great Moanruad prefix from Eire. Last century Laverick had developed the orange belton English Setter by crossbreeding English Setters with Red Setters, and impressed least of all th Irish themselves. Bob told Jean: *"Most shower of hail informa tion went with John Nash who believed it hopeless in getting true Irish shower of hail. He believed the shower of hail colo came during the time when setters were just setters."* Jean describes the coldness expressed by Nash in his correspondenc to American friends on the subject of Llewellin and Laverick, founders of the English Setter breed.

That took us back to the legendary showers from northwest Ireland and the known de Freyne shower used by Nuttall in th breeding programme producing the influential bitch *Maybe* whose blood ran thickly through early field and show foundations into the showered Menaifrons and Hartsbourne Flame h self. "Maybe… they were English Setter crosses!" I challenge Henk, and research on the de Freyne lineage was re-opened.

Again we turn to Leighton-Boyce, this time in his *Survey of Early Setters* where he quotes the credible Lloyd and Millner from last century: *"The breed of the French Park red setters was kept with the greatest care and judgement during the latt half of the 18th century. Arthur French, father of the first Lord de Freyne, bred them, and he was MP for Roscommon from 1785 and died in 1820."*

Henk digs out more aged references to the French Park reds, kept by the French families and de Freyne Lords in northwest Eire. Lt.Col. Lloyd saw the last from this strain in 1879 and describes them as "wholly red". Millner also wrote of Maybe: *"... a grand setter of about the seventies that has had the stro influence of the present strains"* and Rasbridge wrote in February 1951: *"The Ch. Maybe family is the oldest known in the breed. ... this family has around 90 years of recorded history. ... It has been more noted for the production of field trial winners, the last well known one being F. T. Ch. Menaifron Rosina O'Moy."*

Henk also discovers the French Park setters finally degenerate because of inbreeding after the death of the second Lord de Freyne, Rev. John French (born 1788). Against a backdrop of

Above: *Ch.Crispian O'Kilner, the great-grandson of mysterious shower of hail Bloompat, won the challenge at Crufts in 1930.*

carefully kept inbreeding on red dogs for the best part of a century, the purity of Nuttall's chosen showered de Freyne sire could hardly be questioned. In a climate of lingering prejudice against the origins of white markings, the shower of hail has weathered yet another storm!

VITAL LINK

After so much reliance on the writings of late historians, be they Irish, English or European, it was time to look for an eye witness, someone who could describe their experience and history in the spoken word today. We turned to *Laura Dunne*, a lady almost 89 years of age, still entirely self-reliant and tucked away in her cosy home in Dublin, Ireland.

Laura's voice chuckled on the telephone, talking about her bad eye, deaf ear and niggling angina. *"I might die before you get back here!"* She laughed. *"Best you don't,"* I replied, *"because I'll dig you up and plonk you back in your chair!!"*

Laura told of her family history in the breed, not only has she watched the breed spread and develop from early in the century, but she remembers well the history taught by her mother, grandfather and great-grandfather, all of whom kept Irish Reds before her.

Yes! She saw the showers herself, some were flecked, some were spotted, some slightly, some greatly ... and oh yes they were surely purebred! What happened to them all? I asked, and Laura gave us the vital real-life link we had been missing.

Through the turbulent political and economic history of Ireland where the desire for solid reds and the Red Setter standard outcast the showers, "mismarked" Reds bred by the landowning kennels were given away to working folk who used them for hunting grouse and partridge on the vast wild and common moorlands. The dogs were considered inferior, and were cast away without pedigrees. Some may have been bred from where food was spare but the showers never took part directly in mainstream breeding. Certainly their ancient genes silently slipped through the generations via their revered, solid red kin and in that way rare glimpses of the showers touched history from time to time in dogs like the Menaifrons and Flame.

Laura's story substantiated our rationale and added weight to Ray O'Dwyer's much later observations.

BREAKTHROUGH FROM NEW ZEALAND

Another email from Jean flies to my computer. She had picked up the New Zealand name *Doyle* through friends of hers in America and had a feeling they might be worth contacting. Liz and Gary? I have known them for many years, I'll telephone them tonight!

Liz is fascinated by our shower of hail story. Yes she knew the Hartsbourne Flame story and I tell her about today's Sheantullagh shower, describing the white flecks through the body coat, wondering if they're a real fading shower and lamenting our frustration trying to track a firm known passage of the trait back to a full-blown Shower of hail.

"When Mrs Walker first brought Flame along, she said to me quietly: 'You know, Gilbert, they will all laugh at her coat but she is very sound.' The point was a set of little white dots, hardly visible, scattered all over her body. I said that I was delighted at last to see the legendary shower of hail marking which I thought had almost disappeared, and which I hoped augured well for her future. I am afraid Flame did not attract much favour in the ring despite her excellent ribs and good quarters."
Gilbert Leighton-Boyce 1973

***Above:* Mrs Eileen Walker photographed with a grandson of Hartsbourne Flame.**

"Wait a minute", says Liz. *"Hartsbourne Sirius had those fine white flecks right through his red coat. I saw him and put my hands on him when he arrived from England. The flecks were spread right through his body coat and each fleck was only a few white hairs."*

I race to my files, *Hartsbourne Sirius* born in 1966, litter brother to the great winning bitch English Show Champion Hartsbourne Starlight. I shuffle through James' English book of champions and there they are … inbred again and again, numerous times, to *Hartsbourne Flame* within the walls of one kennel for many generations with no outside influence.

Thank you Liz, that's exactly what we have been looking for!

NEW VISIONS

Liz is scheduled to judge the breed in Ireland in August 1999 and we hope she'll take the opportunity to see the Sheantullagh shower.

The Irish Reds and the Red and Whites, with their recessive red colouring, claim descent directly and purely from the original Land Spaniel, from whence the flecking and particolour genes undoubtedly came. Despite their incredible history, Irish Setters have become the finest performing, hardiest and most productive of bird dogs above all other setters, in the written word of sportsmen through the ages. Their genes have enriched many other breeds.

Credit must go to the late *Eileen Walker* of Hartsbourne, for daring to stand the hail proud in the public eye against a wave of inescapable heat, bequeathing its genes for the future appreciation of lovers of the breed. We wonder if the hail has melted beyond possible restoration, or if days to come will see it gather layer by layer once again on the grounds of its native homeland as the third breed, the Irish Shower of Hail.

SANDY PETER'KA / HENK TEN KLOOSTER