



WALTER CECIL MOORE

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## OBITUARY

WALTER CECIL MOORE, 1900-1967

(With Plate 22)

Walter Cecil Moore, who died on 18 November 1967, was born at Frome in Somerset, and it was from Sexey's School, Bruton, that he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, with a county scholarship in 1919. He graduated with Honours in Natural Sciences in 1922 and stayed on for research under Professor F. T. Brooks, with whom he published two papers on silver-leaf disease. In 1925 he was appointed assistant mycologist at the Plant Pathology Laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries where he remained until his retirement in 1962.

Working for 10 years with Dr G. H. Pethybridge he soon developed a flair for meticulous recording of reports and information in the literature. One of his first tasks was to make a special study of the literature on bulb diseases and this culminated in the publication, in 1939, of a Ministry bulletin, no. 117, *Diseases of bulbs*, an exemplary guide for both advisers and growers. He retained his interest in bulbs for the rest of his life: a small plot of narcissi in his garden was carefully replenished with new varieties and detailed observations were carefully recorded every year.

It was not long before he established a reputation for prompt provision of information and help over the whole range of plant diseases to the Ministry's Advisory Mycologists—then located in University departments. For many years his comprehensive card index occupied one side of his room and he also kept a personal index on plant pathologists recording the achievements of most of the many with whom he came into contact. Many of the more interesting plant diseases referred to him were recorded in the series of short notes, under the title 'New and interesting plant diseases', in these *Transactions* from 1939 to 1949 to which he contributed a surprising number of new records from his own garden in Harpenden. For many years he was responsible for collating reports of diseases sent in by collaborators from all over the country and from these and relevant publications he produced two Ministry Bulletins (nos. 126 and 139) on the occurrence of diseases on all crops in England and Wales for the periods 1931-42 and 1943-6. His close association with advisers continued when specialist plant pathologists were appointed in the new National Agricultural Advisory Service in 1946 and he was Chairman of their Conference for 14 years.

He took an active part in the affairs of a number of scientific societies and especially those of the British Mycological Society. He helped to invigorate the Society's Plant Pathology Committee on which he served intermittently in several capacities from 1931-1947, taking a leading part in pioneering work on disease assessment, and in the compilation of the

second edition of the *List of common names of British plant diseases*. He was alert to the economic significance of plant diseases and had very definite ideas about the future development and organization of plant pathology which he made the subject of his Presidential Address to the Society in 1941. He was editor of the *Transactions* from 1946 to 1951, and one of his most cherished distinctions was his election as an Honorary Member of the Society in 1951. Among other societies and organizations he served the Institute of Biology, the Association of Applied Biology (of which he was also an Honorary Member; Treasurer for several years; and President in 1947-8), the Agricultural Research Council, the Royal Horticultural Society, the National Institute of Agricultural Botany and the Institution of Professional Civil Servants: he was also an associate editor of the *Journal of Horticultural Science*.

In 1949, at the time our photograph was taken, Moore became Director of the 'Path. Lab.' and immediately set out to establish two new sections for disease and pest assessment work and to launch a new journal *Plant Pathology*, the first number of which appeared in 1952. His long experience in the operation of plant quarantine regulations enabled him, as Chairman of the drafting Committee, help F.A.O. to inaugurate the Plant Protection Convention in 1957, and to assist in the setting up of E.P.P.O., the Mediterranean and European Plant Protection Organisation, in the same year. He served on many of E.P.P.O.'s working parties, travelled extensively and through his friendship with his opposite numbers in many countries did much to rationalize international quarantine restrictions. In this country he had long been concerned with the official approval scheme for plant protection chemicals and when the risks in the use of toxic pesticides became of increasing concern he devoted more and more of his time as Chairman of the official committee concerned with the negotiations which led in 1957 to a voluntary notification scheme aimed to provide safeguards to users and consumers from the hazards involved in the use of toxic chemicals.

Moore was awarded the C.B.E. in 1955 and after one of his longest and toughest fights the Path. Lab. was at last, in 1961, provided with a new building, with purpose-built laboratories, to accommodate a great increase in staff. A year later he retired and all too soon ill health forced him to give up all his official and voluntary commitments.

Moore was a keen and accomplished sportsman, he played hockey and badminton, and a game of tennis was one of his main recreations. He was fond of gardening, classical music and the works of C. P. Snow and for many years the Isles of Scilly provided his ideal holiday setting. He was a prodigious worker and much of his leisure time was spent drafting reports and, in later years, much of his book *British parasitic fungi* published in 1959, was prepared at home. As a Director he was creative and decisive. His advice was sought by many and to more than a few he became a guide, philosopher and friend: over many years he and his wife contributed their share to the renowned friendly atmosphere of B.M.S. forays.

F. JOAN MOORE