

great sport of the country folk of Westmorland and Cumberland was trotting races. This went on until fairly recently; big stakes were offered at the local Shows, so attractive that the day came when American bred trotting horses came down from the Glasgow and Manchester areas for the money, followed by a crowd of bookmakers, which completely spoilt the grand old sport of the district and our local trotting matches died out. Now it is horse leaping instead, the writer wonders how long it will take the professionals to kill that attraction to the crowds at local Agricultural Shows. The Fell breed of pony has such marvellous energy and is so full of real stamina that it was quite a common sight to see a 13.2 h.h. pony winning a two mile race in exactly six minutes. I wonder if many of my readers have ever timed their ponies in a flat-out trot over a measured mile? Try it some day and you will find that your ordinary pony will take five minutes instead of three to trot a mile.

Many years ago the Board of Agriculture gave a sum of money each year to be awarded to registered Fell Pony Stallions to travel the Fell pony breeding districts of Cumberland, Westmorland and Teesdale. This encouragement from the Government did wonders for our local breed of Fell pony. As time went along the old Board of Agriculture became the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and that department handed over to the Light Horse Breeding Department of The War Office.

Some 30 years ago, our Fell Pony Stallion Shows, held at Penrith generally in the last Tuesday in April, attracted great numbers of most typical Fell pony stallions. A condition of the award was that they must all be purely-bred pedigree and registered Fell ponies and they must not exceed 14 hands in height. Officials of the Light Horse Breeding Department of the War Office were present and it was a great day at Penrith. Five Premiums, each valued at £80, were awarded for ponies to travel the five districts—Appleby, Keswick, Shap, Kirkby Stephen and Middleton-in-Teesdale. The Council of The Fell Pony Society selected judges from the actual breeders of Fell ponies of each district. Besides the five Premium ponies, the judges also selected five Reserve ponies just in case anything should go wrong with the Stallions carrying the premiums.

£400 a year was a marvellous help to Fell Pony breeding, we had lots of Agricultural Shows and the standard became absolutely magnificent. The National Pony Society held an Annual Show at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, in March of each year, at which there were not only individual breed classes, but challenge cups for the best Stallion, Brood Mare and Group of Three Ponies, of all of the Mountain and Moorland pony breeds.

Our Society used to appoint judges to select the ponies for the London group (generally one Stallion and two Brood Mares), and travelling expenses were paid by the Society. It was a thrill to have one of your own ponies selected, and a greater thrill to go to London to see it win the individual Cup, then go on to the group against Highland, Welsh, New Forest, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Dales and even Shetland Pony Groups. What a sight to see all of these groups in the one great ring at Islington! Someone like the late Lord Daresbury, or the late Captain Alex S. Campbell of the War Office, or some other individual who knew all of the breeds, was the single judge, and to stand there at the head of a topping Fell Stallion, jet black in colour, and fairly on his toes with good food and exercise, and wait for the results, was one of the great joys of owning good ponies. Lord Daresbury used to walk round just looking at the big Dales group, then the marvellous grey Welsh Mountain group, then back to the little Shetlands. Then he would come along to the Fell group and say: "please stand out there"—we all grinned approval. From us he would go to the little Shetland group and say: "please stand up next to the Fell group"—walk once more round the lot and say aloud: "Yes, I am not looking for the group which would make most under the hammer, I want the group which best represents its own breed—The most even, all three ponies from the one mould, all true to its own original breed, with all of its own features correct. My selection is this marvellous Shetland group, they are all true Shetland, they are all the same size, all the same dark colour, all great movers, and all just what they should be to represent their lovely little breed."

"I congratulate you Fell people; you have a lovely group of ponies, in fact every group in this ring is a most wonderful representation of its own native breed." Those were the

days! you would find at stables, all sorts of people coming round to ask if you would sell. It was after one of these group classes at Islington when the Fell ponies had won all three Cups (Stallion, Brood Mare and Group), that the first Stallion of the Fell breed was sold to go to help pony breeding in Spain.

The Spanish Royal Commission came back and back for Fell pony Stallions (the Writer sold 29 Fell and Dales pony Stallions to Spain), we sold Fell ponies to Argentine, U.S.A., India, and people all over Britain, after our ponies had been seen at The Royal Show and at Islington.

About the year 1933, The Light Horse Breeding Department of the War Office ceased to function; horses were not wanted any more for the War Office, so we lost our great income. It was a terrible shock to The Fell Pony Society; we were simply stranded. At that time there were a number of small Clydesdale Cross Cob Stallions in Cumberland and Westmorland, and the great temptation to owners of Fell pony mares was to put their beautifully bred pedigree Fell pony mares to these larger stallions when the truly-bred Fell pony stallion had lost its subsidy, and the time had come when it was almost impossible for owners of Fell pony stallions to put them on to the road in the season for what they could pick up in stud fees without the £80 premium added.

The position of the whole Fell pony breed became most serious,; fortunately the ponies were so wonderful that they still had some good friends who were anxious that the true pony breed should not go right out of existence. Just when things were at their worst and the season was coming along and no War Office premiums, King George V. heard of the situation and actually sent a message to The Fell Pony Society with a handsome present to keep the true breed going. This enabled us to hold our Show and to offer the King's Premium and to get the band playing again. It was wonderful. Our King, of all people, saved from extinction the Fell Pony breed. He bought our ponies, King George VI still has them. He, like King George V. is very interested; their Royal Highnesses Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret are interested, they are breeding Fell ponies at Sandringham. That great

encouragement in 1933, when we suddenly found ourselves to be without funds, was a God-send, it cheered up the Council of the Fell Pony Society and we fought through until the Hon. Alex Parker got the Betting Control Board to make a grant to the Mountain and Moorland Pony breeds of Britain. The grant comes through the National Pony Society to each of the native breeds of pony, to be awarded each year for the benefit of native pony breeding.

In the year 1946, The Fell Pony Society decided that it would be a great benefit to the Society to have an Enclosure in the breeding season instead of travelling stallions on the road, as in days gone by. Travelling expenses for men and ponies and difficulty about fodder makes it almost impossible to travel pony stallions. The Society made an arrangement with Mr. Wilson of Berrier, Cumberland, to send ponies to a large and most suitable walled-in pasture high up in the hills, exactly the sort of land on which Fell ponies summer really well. In 1946 the Society turned out on that Enclosure a Pedigree and registered Fell pony stallion and 31 registered Fell pony mares. The crop of foals in 1947 was far in excess of the average gained by travelling stallions ; in other words the Council of the Society is convinced that an Enclosure into which is turned a number of selected mares and a stallion, is a far cheaper and more certain way in which to breed ponies. The whole thing is so simple. Mr. Wilson walks round with his dog and stick each morning, counts the ponies over, sees that there are none lame and that is all about it. The ponies remain in the enclosure, most of them with foal at foot, for about 8 weeks from about the middle of May.

In the seasons 1947 and 1948 the same Enclosure at Berrier has been rented. The Council of the Fell Pony Society is most grateful to Sir Berkeley Pigott, Bart., the Hon. Secretary to the New Forest Pony Society for teaching the Fell Pony Society how to breed ponies cheaply, easily, and marvellously successfully by turning a pedigree pony stallion into an Enclosure with selected registered mares of his own breed. Breeding in this natural way results in a very high percentage of foals. The whole scheme is so very easy that we wonder why all the other native pony breed societies do not follow Sir Berkeley as we did.

THE POPULARITY OF OUR GREAT BREED.

We are so glad that our Royal Family are so interested in the Fell breed. King George VI. and his father before him owned Fell ponies and our Princesses ride and drive their lovely black pony "Windsor Gipsy" a great deal, preferring her to their other ponies. When I saw "Windsor Gipsy" three years ago in her comfortable box at Windsor Castle she looked a perfect example of a Fell pony, with a long shoulder blade set at right angle with a short back and strong loin, her coat glossy with good food and grooming. Now she has a black filly foal to swell the Windsor stud.

A really well made Fell pony is a very comfortable ride, with a head carriage and a long enough neck to give a good rein to the rider. It always looks well and does equally well in harness. In other words, a really good saddle horse looks and does well in harness, but a good driving horse, bred for harness work, does not give a good ride. Our breeders realize that it is a mistake to breed to harness type only, and that is where the Fell breed has scored considerably. Dozens of Fell ponies have been bought for carrying people up the steep moors and deer forests of Scotland, for they are very comfortable and steady, never faltering however rough the going may be. They make good ponies for carrying in the red deer from some high top to the larder, and are very easy to train. We had a young pony in Martindale who I trained myself when I was only fifteen, and it carried deer off the steep summits in the Ullswater district without any trouble. This just shows how very tractable these ponies are if they are handled quietly from the beginning but, like all mountain and moorland ponies, if they are badly frightened by anything they never forget it. In the same way, a Fell mare never forgets her first-born foals however old they all become, and she will protect her grown up sons and daughters against all newcomers to the herd.

IMPORTANT EVENTS FOR 1948.

The Royal Show—July 6th to 9th, 1948.

A class for the best Fell, Dales or Highland pony will be scheduled at York this year.

The National Pony Show—July 28th to 30th, 1948.

There will be 4 Classes for Fell ponies at Roehampton, besides the championship classes as there were last year. These will include—(1) Stallions ; (2) Colt or Filly, Yearlings and Two-year olds ; (3) Three and Four-year old Mares ; (4) Riding Class.

At this show last year, the Fell ponies carried off the championship and reserve championship of the whole show, beating all the other British breeds of mountain and moorland ponies shown under saddle.

The International Horse Show—August 16th to 20th.

A parade of mountain and moorland ponies is to be held at the White City, London, and a group of three ponies from each British mountain and moorland breed is to be exhibited ; each group will consist of a stallion, brood mare with foal at foot, and a riding pony to be shown in hand. The groups will be the very best possible examples of the breed, and will be as alike as possible. Princess Margaret will present Rosettes to each of the ponies during one of the several parades. This should be a great advertisement for our Fell ponies, as there will be many visitors from overseas at the Show, especially as the International Horse Show will be immediately preceded by the Olympic games.

Our own Lakeland Shows—

It is hoped that many shows will schedule classes for registered ponies, this eliminates any disputes which may arise owing to eligibility of the entries. Most of the Fell pony classes at the Penrith Show this year are to be for registered stock only. This show schedules individual classes for ponies of all ages, as well as saddle classes, and one for ponies to be ridden by children under sixteen.

OBITUARY.

Since writing this booklet, we have lost one of the greatest supporters of the Fell breed, Mr. Roy B. Charlton, who died suddenly in May, at his home "The Linnels," Hexham, where he and his father before him had maintained a wonderful and uniform herd of Fell ponies. His enthusiasm in keeping the breed on its feet during the difficult war years was unbounded. He loved to enjoy life, and to see other people happy too, and through his kindness and helpfulness and sound advice he encouraged other younger people to start small herds of their own, and thereby safeguard the future of our great breed of ponies. All pony loving people owe Roy Charlton a great debt of gratitude for all he did in the pony world.

We trust the foregoing history of The Fell Pony Society might be of great interest to pony lovers throughout the Country, and we give it in the sincere hope that it will help us in our endeavours for this great breed of pony. The Fell Pony Society has far too few members, our total yearly subscription is too small. Please join. The Annual Subscription is only 5/- which should be sent to :—Mrs. McCosh, Dalemain, Penrith, or Mr. Joseph Relph, Birkett Bank, Threlkeld, Keswick, with name and address of the new member.

Application for Membership in the Fell Pony Society.

Name

Address

Subscription £ s. d. enclosed for year