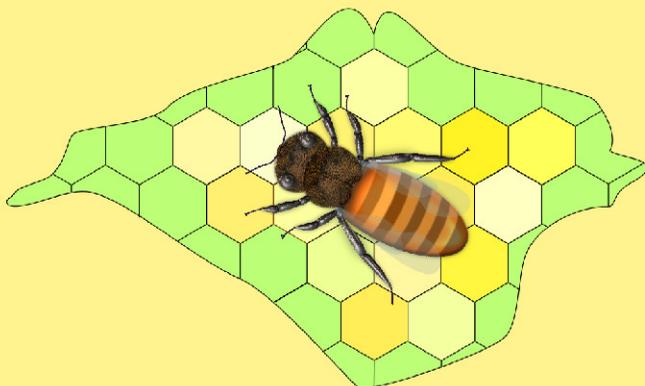


The  
Wight Bee



July 2015

Hon Editor Gillian Belben  
3 Sheat Cottages  
Chillerton PO30 3EW  
sheat3@btinternet.com

Issue 114

'Not a single bee has ever sent you an invoice. And that is part of the problem—because most of what comes to us from nature is free, because it is not invoiced, because it is not priced, because it is not traded in markets, we tend to ignore it.'

**Pavan Sukhdev—The economics of ecosystems and biodiversity, UN report**

The Journal of  
The Isle of Wight Beekeepers Association  
[www.iwbka.org.uk](http://www.iwbka.org.uk)

As July draws to a close my beekeeping worries cover three main areas:

- why did the two artificial swarms I carried out from my strongest colony, which produced many queen cells in May and June, not 'take'? One was with a capped cell, the other uncapped; both were fed with syrup, but neither produced a good queen. See Liz Van Wyk's update from the teaching apiary for more examples of 'queens behaving badly'.
- Why in busy hives with two or three heavy supers are they reluctant to fully cap the frames, leaving the central 'arch' uncapped. I was poised to extract at least some honey but have now decided to wait till the end of summer.
- Am I going to suffer as last year and the year before with wax moth infestation in comb? Wax moths can attack any stored combs but are attracted more to brood comb as they prefer the larval skins and pupal cases left in the brood comb as food. I have tried an organic treatment and freezing (the best way). There is an excellent leaflet on the BBKA website about the wax moth and various treatments. The only control method they don't mention is used by a number of experienced beekeepers here: chase and collect as many spiders as you can (bear with me), decant them into the boxes, close the lid and store somewhere ventilated. The spiders will happily spend the winter munching the way through the moths and larvae.

[http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/wax\\_moth\\_I020\\_\(data\)\\_r2\\_1342860174.pdf](http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/wax_moth_I020_(data)_r2_1342860174.pdf)

Finally, many thanks to the nine people who contributed to this issue.

**Gillian Belben**

### In praise of *Rubus fruticosus*

Otherwise known as the blackberry, by now in July it is one of the main sources of nectar for our bees. We may find its presence irritating and painful in the wrong place, but it nevertheless should be admired for its ability to thrive in all the habitats of the Island: the coast, farmland, grassland, heathland, woodland, downs, gardens, waste ground and of course hedgerows. Its nectar is also important for Brimstone and Speckled Wood Butterflies, its fruits for song thrushes and yellowhammers, and its undergrowth provides hiding places for hedgehogs and dormice.

## The Coppins Bridge Tree

For as long as I have been a beekeeper, I have been asked to clear “a swarm” of bees near the roundabout at Coppins Bridge. There have always been people terrified of this colony of bees flying near the footpath. They were residents of a tall poplar tree. The only time I was called to a true swarm from them was one which covered a police car parked nearby. In the past if you wanted a swarm of bees in Newport you had to beat Joe Dawson to it. This was nearly impossible, as he was so well known and the first beekeeper who called.

Various pest control people have also been called in the past and they have always refused to exterminate the colony.

A few weeks ago I had a call from Groundsells, a local landscape contractor, who wished to discuss the removal of the bees as the tree had been classed as dangerous due to a large split. It needed removing but the owner did not wish harm to the bees.

I explained that due to its position and locality it would be an impossible task. The only option was to fell the tree with care and take the section of trunk which we suspected housed the bees to a different location. To my surprise the owner of the land said this was a good idea and they would be prepared to meet the cost.

It all came as a bit of a rush but it was arranged that Frank, Christine and I would attend to make sure all entrances were covered so that the bees did not sting too many people if they escaped. Frank and Christine went the night before to cover the entrance hole with mesh so they had ventilation.

We were due to meet at 10 the next morning but a call from Frank to tell us the tree fellers had been stung got us attend quicker. On arrival we found that the bees were still locked in to their home but the bees that had stung had previously made a new colony in the tree next door and were objecting to the noise of saws. Frank supplied bee suits to the workers, so no more stings. The tree was almost fully felled by 12 and we then waited for a lorry to transport the sectioned tree trunk to its new location at Quarr Teaching Apiary field.

The lorry arrived, with lift, and the final cut was made to the lower section of trunk. The lift raised the section onto the lorry bed. Once secure it was taken to Quarr where it was lifted to its new home. The bees were released and are now settled. *(Images of this heroic feat can be found on the back page).*

**Dave Cassell**

## Quarr Teaching Apiary

### July update

As I write this, a candidate for the Basic assessment is busily making up a frame as the first part of her assessment. She claimed to be nervous when she arrived but Mike Holloway, the assessor, has clearly put her at her ease as she is chatting away comparing Nationals with WBCs. Two more candidates will be taking the assessment today and another next month. I wish more people would do this as it's such a good way of consolidating knowledge and boosting confidence.

Just four people, of seven who initially signed up, took the General Husbandry course last week and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge, I believe. This may well be the last time our Association is offered the course at the subsidised rate, but should you wish to attend one next year I'm sure the BBKA could put you in touch with one in Hampshire.

The first apiary meeting of the season at Quarr was based on bee health. Derek provided a gazebo and Ian organised the microscopists to examine samples of bees brought in by three or four beekeepers for Acarine and nosema. Much relief for those whose bees were clear but fascination for all of us attending in seeing both disorders, and magnified varroa, under the microscope. The second apiary meeting, in June, focussed on varroa monitoring and treatment as the varroa population can soar in late June onwards and treatments are limited when there is a honey flow. We had treated some colonies with Hiveclean and some with icing sugar two days before as a varroa diagnostic and also demonstrated how to use both. The comparison was interesting as the met fall was quite considerable with both.

Natalie asked me at the beginning of June what the theme of the July meeting would be. I was unable to answer, partly because she'd caught me unawares, and partly because I had no idea what the bees might throw up by early July. In fact, the decision was made for me by the bees as we have had similar problems to many others with queens doing strange things. Where is the book that lists one of the swarm signs as a queen still laying when there are multiple sealed queen cells?

Supersedure, yes, swarming, no. We have had one colony develop laying workers despite all our attempts to requeen or add eggs, young queens being replaced, some just disappearing.

Sounds familiar? Fortunately, apart from the laying workers which have been shaken out, all seem to have come through.

This year we had nineteen people take the beginners' course and all but one or two either have their own bees now or are still involved with someone else's, in at least two cases looking after bees owned by more experienced but absent beekeepers. I am hugely impressed with the number who are happily collecting swarms and solving problems with minimal help from anyone else. Frequently the emails are along the lines of, "There is this problem, should I do this, this or this?" Brilliant. For the first time, we suggested that our new beekeepers could continue coming to Quarr for the rest of the season to gain experience. Unfortunately there were too few to be able to run this each Saturday, but three come along on Thursdays and are becoming impressively capable with their handling.

We have arranged two taster days in August for those who have expressed an interest in beekeeping, either by contacting one of the committee or at one of the events we have attended this year. There are still a few spaces as I write, so feel free to contact me with the email address of anyone you know who is interested in taking up beekeeping.

**Liz Van Wyk**

**HELP! We need a new Treasurer!**

As discussed at the last AGM, Barry Walshe wishes to retire from his present post of Treasurer as due to family commitments he is no longer able to attend all Committee meetings.

We are now half way to the next AGM with no new Treasurer in sight. Is there anyone who could fill this post?

You would not be left at the "deep end". Barry has promised his support and would show you the ropes. Also you would have the support of Frank Stevens (Membership Sec) and other Committee members. The commitment is only six meetings per year, one AGM and one Auction.

Please. If you are able to help fill this post could you contact either me or Natalie (Hon Sec).

## Excerpt from The Shepherd's Calendar

John Clare

Now summer is in flower and nature's hum  
Is never silent round her sultry bloom  
Insects as small as dust are never done  
Wi' glittering dance and reeling in the sun  
And green wood fly and blossom haunting bee  
Are never weary of their melody  
Round field hedge now flowers in full glory twine  
Large bindweed bells wild hop and streaked woodbine  
That lift athirst their slender throated flowers  
Agape for dew falls and for honey showers  
These round each bush in sweet disorder run  
And spread their wild hues to the sultry sun,  
Where its silk netting lace on twigs and leaves  
The mottled spider at eve's leisure weaves,  
That every morning meet the poet's eye  
Like fairies' dew-wet dresses hung to dry.  
The wheat swells into ear and leaves below  
The May-month wild flowers and their gaudy show.



## Recipes with honey

### Honey cakes

The following recipe comes from a 1984 recipe book from Johanna Jones called 'The Island Cookbook'. In her introduction she wrote:

'My most lasting impression of the Island which is my home is that it is an island of flowers: crowding to the gates of cottage gardens, massed in great banks of colour beside manor house walls, blowing freely in the sea winds over the downs. And if you visit the Island and would like to capture this special charm to take home, then you must buy some Island honey, full of the flavour and scent of its many flowers.'

6 ozs honey  
2 ozs butter  
8 ozs plain flour  
Half a level tsp bicarbonate of soda  
Grated rind of a lemon  
2 tbsps milk if needed

1. Heat honey and butter together, pour into a bowl to cool a little.
2. Sift in the flour and the bicarbonate of soda.
3. Add the grated lemon rind and milk if necessary to make a pliable dough. Chill wrapped dough.
4. Turn out onto a floured surface and shape or cut into cakes 1 ½ inches in diameter.
5. Bake for 10-15 minutes at 180C. Be careful that they do not overbake. The cakes should be crisp on the outside and soft inside.



## Island beekeeper interview

### Dorothy Haynes

#### **When do you first remember being aware of bees and honey?**

I can remember my first encounter with bees as if it were yesterday! I was about 6 and playing in the garden when I fell head first into a clump of sedum - the screams were blood curdling. For the next 50 years I did all I could to avoid bees.

During the war honey wasn't rationed so everyone had a jar in the cupboard when they could get hold of it, to make up for the lack of sugar. I don't remember ever having clear honey, just crystallised, and I clearly recall my grandfather telling me he thought bees made honey from mustard flowers. But he thought all brassicas with yellow flowers were mustard!

#### **What tempted you into beekeeping at first?**

When the allotments in East Cowes embarked on a grant-aided bee conservation project our association agreed to fund 4 places on Terry Willis's course and I was to be one of the students. In the event someone else was more keen than me but once I learned what I was missing I regretted having stepped aside. I had to be content with picking up as much as I could from everyone else - either people on the course or from more experienced beekeepers in the IWBKA who are so generous with their time when mentoring newbies.

#### **Did you have an easy beginning with lots of help or did you struggle?**

By the time Richard had set up his first colony I hadn't even had my head in a hive. I remember being shocked by the number of bees and the noise they made - the aggressive way they flew around my face filled me with terror and immediately took me back to the fall in the sedum. It was nearly two years before I gained sufficient confidence to have another go. During this time I watched from the sidelines, envying my beekeeping friends whose passion was inevitably rubbing off on me.

#### **What hives do you use and how did you choose which format?**

Never having seen a standard National hive before joining the IWBKA our first choice was to go for a WBC. It is still my favourite hive but having been given a couple of Nationals recently I can certainly see the advantage of the modern hives. Much to the disgust of a couple of close (and very experienced) beekeeping friends, these days I very much favour working solely on supers so I intend to follow in Harry Carter's footsteps.

#### **How many colonies do you hope to start this next Spring with, and what sort of journey has it been to build them up?**

Like many Island beekeepers we came through the winter with all our 6 colonies

intact, with two swarms being added in June. Four of them are in a sheltered copse where we have never suffered winter losses and the other four are in an open field surrounded by a mesh windbreak which we hope will be sufficient protection against whatever weather is thrown at them. A few years ago people envied our apiary at Ventnor Botanic Garden where it was so windy they spent all their time fighting the elements. Despite the nearly ten months forage on their doorstep there was never any spare honey for us.

**What has been your happiest discovery along the way?**

Of all the beekeeping tasks my real passion is collecting swarms.

**Do you have any 'rules' that you observe every year leading to recommendations you could pass on?**

Keeping bees is no different from keeping any other pets, there's just a few more of them to look after. I wouldn't keep a nasty dog or an unruly horse so my top tip would be "don't spoil your enjoyment by keeping nasty bees".

**What has been your worst beekeeping mistake?**

A couple of years ago one of our colonies turned really nasty, I mean truly evil. We had heard nasty bees usually produce the most honey so once in a while we girded our loins long enough to add a super, and another, and another until we boasted six supers. After several weeks it was obvious they had calmed down so we opened the hive to remove all this fabulous honey only to find most of the bees were dead because all their stores had gone. We had not realised they were being robbed out by some nearby colonies belonging to another beekeeper - we hadn't read the signs properly. Here's another top tip - check out robbing on YouTube - the behaviour is obvious once you know the signs. Harry Carter knew the solution - put a pane of glass in front of the entrance of the hive being robbed. Residents will find their way in whilst the robbers are totally baffled over why they can't gain access, so they leave.

**How has beekeeping fitted in with the rest of your life?**

What with being involved with the Teaching Apiary and dealing with all the honey that goes into their shop, in addition to our own beekeeping, the rest of my life has to fit in with beekeeping. I shall forever regret not having taken up beekeeping many, many years ago.

Finally, as a Londoner I knew nothing about keeping bees until I moved to the Isle of Wight and the biggest surprise to me was that there were women beekeepers - it had never occurred to me that women could or would keep bees. I shall always remember my first visit to Mary's apiary - how I envy her experience and her knowledge.

## Bumbling Advice

During most summers beekeepers will get at least one call about bumble bees. Sometimes they are described as a swarm and usually a few questions will ascertain their real identity.

Of course the usual advice boils down to, "Leave them alone" but this is not the kind of advice that some expect. Over the years I have had a variety of reactions my attempts to explain the position. On one occasion I told the caller that the bees were most unlikely to sting:

"Well, one stung my dog"

"I am surprised about that"

"Actually it was eating it at the time"

" Well there are exceptions"

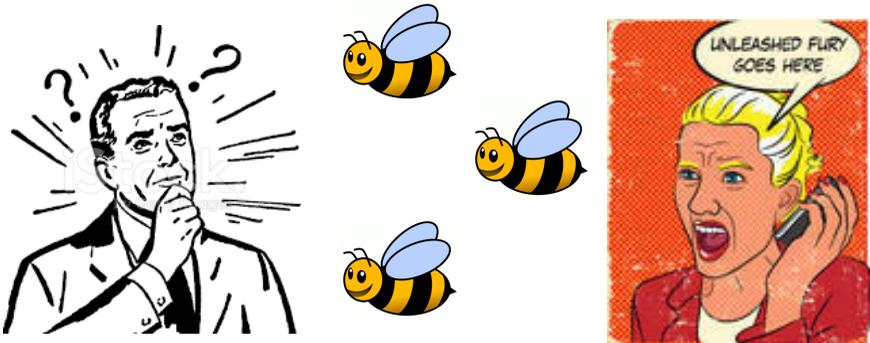
One morning at home I spent a long time advising a lady on the Pan Estate who had bumbles under her garage. She got very agitated and rang off.

I was working at the Citizens Advice Bureau at the time and that same afternoon a caller rang about some bumble bees.

My colleague who took the call said, "I will pass you over to Mr Marshall who knows about bees".

"Don't ask him, he's bloody useless", complained the caller, who had obviously wanted a different answer to the one I had earlier given.

**Rob Marshall**



## **Newchurch Bee Walk on June 28th**

The rain kept away but the temperature stayed a little cool as Ian Boyd took a group of around 30 of us through the Bee Fields of Newchurch. It is land to the rear of the Primary School and open to the public. The site is now one of the most important bee conservation sites on the Island. For those of you who missed it I suggest a trip on your own but keep your eyes open to catch the huge variety of butterflies, wasps, bees and beetles that have made this area their home. Unfortunately you will miss out on the presence of Ian.

Ian knows this area inside out and was able to give us a commentary as we walked the paths between the trees and shrubs, some of which have been planted and some which have just turned up to give a very mixed and beautiful area for all wildlife.

How Ian recognises and points out the insects and identifies them all not just by their common name but also by their Latin name is beyond me. His enthusiasm shines through and makes the time spent with him interesting, informative and fascinating.

All enjoyed the walk although some members were 'lost' en route for a while. The rest of us just presumed they wanted to play Hide and Seek.

**Dave Cassell**

Cloudy skies did not dampen Ian Boyd's enthusiasm as he led a group of 30 on a fascinating circular walk around the Bee Fields in Newchurch. He was able to inspire the group with his in-depth knowledge of the many species of flora and fauna at the site. He encouraging us all to look at, discuss and consider plants and innovative ideas which could be introduced into any garden to attract some or many of the solitary bees which have been found there. (96 species recorded so far!). Hogweed had attracted a particularly rare solitary bee and a composite woodland seat had become home for wasps as well as bumble bees. Keen-eyed bee keepers spotted the industrious mining bees, making the most of the ground's sandy conditions left by the previous farming of sweetcorn in the area. The tiny rhinoceros beetle engaged us all as did Ian's knowledge and compelling interest and involvement in the Bee Fields project.

**Lynne Churchill-Slough**

## Landmarks and events of the Isle Of Wight—54

### Rookley Village School



Southern Vectis timetables list Rookley School as a bus stop but there has not been a school on this site since 1958 when the last pupils left. Since then the buildings have been kept in good order and recently the owner spent much time, effort and money attempting to get the clock back to its former glory. The school was built in the mid eighteenth hundreds at the sole expense of local benefactor Richard Woodward, owner of the thriving Rookley Brickyard. He not only financed the building but also paid the staff wages.

In 1870 a public meeting was called by local vicars about the future financing of the Rookley and Arreton Schools. An appeal for annual subscriptions followed and in due course a “Voluntary Scheme” was adopted that brought a Government Grant and which gave the local Authority more power.

The first inspectors visited the school in 1892. Little is reported about the education facilities but unsurprisingly the sanitary arrangements were deemed unsatisfactory. It was felt that the existing bucket system could not cope with the sixty odd pupils’ needs. The toilet facilities remained a problem for years. The school carried on educating Rookley children for the next 50 years and is remembered with affection by those who spent formative years there.

Falling numbers, problems with school meals and leaks in the building led to the decision to close the school. The headteacher Mrs Metson took early retirement and staff and pupils were resettled in other local schools.

Over the years the premises have had a variety of occupiers but the imposing façade and the playground railings bear witness to its former function.

**Rob Marshall**



Exciting new designs..



**GRANULATED HONEY**  
 All our honey will granulate in bottles. It does this because of the high amount of its natural pollen. It can be returned to its liquid state by either of the following methods:  
 (1) Leave the jar undisturbed for 24-36 hours preferably.  
 (2) Stir the jar gently with the honey measure found on the jar. Make sure you stir the honey thoroughly.  
 (3) Remove the jar to a warm place and place in a bath of water at 30-35 degrees. Reassemble the bottle in the centre of the jar will continue to become liquid after the heating time has finished.  
 HONEY IS UNSUITABLE FOR INFANTS UNDER 12 MONTHS



and classic favourites..

catering for all your labelling needs.

E H THORNE (Beehives) LTD  
 BEEHIVE BUSINESS PARK, RAND, NR. WRAGBY, LINCOLNSHIRE, LN8 5NJ  
 Tel. 01673 858555 sales@thorne.co.uk www.thorne.co.uk  
 like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/E.H.Thorne or follow us on Twitter @ThorneBeehives

43 High St, Cowes, PO31 7RR

Tel 716987

www.bee-garden.co.uk



OPENING HOURS

Mon—Sat 10am—4pm



Hives, suits, tools,

foundation and jars from

major suppliers





**compak**

**Your produce, our Jars  
The Perfect Package**

**Quality Made British  
Honey Jars**

Suppliers of Glass and Plastic  
Containers & Closures Nationwide

2, Ashmead Road  
Keynsham  
Bristol  
BS31 1SX  
Tel : 01179 863 550 Fax : 01179 869 162  
Email : [sales@compaksouth.co.uk](mailto:sales@compaksouth.co.uk)  
Website : [www.compaksouth.com](http://www.compaksouth.com)

**Start next season with  
Honey Jars  
from  
Compak ( South ) Ltd**

Our standard 1lb Honey Jars are British made to our own specification from quality glass.

We offer special quotations for members of BBKA, Bee Farmers & all associations nationwide - you will find our prices competitive & our service efficient with a friendly touch.

For further details on Honey Jars or any other products contact our sales team or visit our website - we'll be pleased to hear from you.



## FOR SALE

**Colonies, nucs and queens**

**All born and bred on the Island**

**Selective Buckfast virgins £15**

**Bee syrup**

**Please text or email for details**

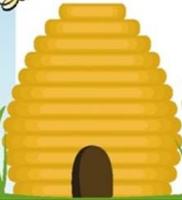
**Klaus on 07742095056 [wighthoney@gmail.com](mailto:wighthoney@gmail.com)**



Brading Road  
Ryde  
Isle Of Wight  
PO33 1QG  
811096

[www.busybeegardencentre.co.uk](http://www.busybeegardencentre.co.uk)

*For all your  
gardening needs  
Delivery Service available*



### **The Isle of Wight Beekeeping Community Facebook page**

We have a wealth of beekeeping knowledge and experience, as well as an increasing number of new beekeepers and those interested in the craft. Facebook offers a useful forum for those with a common interest to share information, photos and advice. The Isle of Wight Beekeeping Community Facebook page has been set up to take advantage of this resource. I hope it will provide a central hub for us to share experiences, compare notes on similar situations and find advice from more experienced beekeepers when in need. I also hope it may be useful in coordinating events and courses, or organising bulk purchases of foundations, jars etc.

If you would like to join this group, you will need a Facebook account. It is a free service and you can sign up at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Then go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/islandbeekeepers> and click the join group button.

The more members the group has, the more useful it will be. If any more experienced beekeepers would be interested in getting involved as group administrators, please email me on [gmillard@googlemail.com](mailto:gmillard@googlemail.com). Group administrators can edit or remove information on the page, thus ensuring that any advice given or suggestions shared are relevant and appropriate.

**George Millard**

## The saga of the famous bee rescue from a Coppins Bridge Tree

