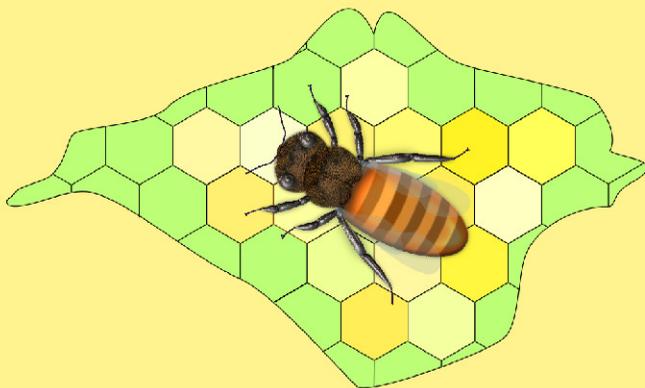


The  
Wight Bee



August 2016

Hon Editor Gillian Belben  
3 Sheat Cottages  
Chillerton PO30 3EW  
gillian.belben@gmail.com

Issue 118

“One can no more approach people without love than one can approach bees without care. Such is the quality of bees...”

**Leo Tolstoy**

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

As we come to end of another season of beekeeping, put the extractors away, turn to feeding and wondering where we stored the mouseguards, bees have been in the news again.

In mid-August a major new study on wild bees foraging heavily on oil seed rape, carried out over 18 years, has attributed half the decline in the wild bee population to the use of neonicotinoids. Other studies have linked damage to honey bees and bumblebees where neonics have been used, but this one, from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, is the first to look at long term impact from 1994 to 2011.

Manufacturers have said that such studies show an association rather than a cause and effect link between the use of neonics and decline of bee populations.

Elsewhere, a study at the National Botanic Garden in Wales has posed the following question ; “We are looking at bees’ favourite plants and, given any plant at all, what do they choose?” The researchers tracked floral visitations by analysing the pollen collected. They found that of all the plants in season and within reach, the bees use only a relatively small number. For example, samples taken in April and May 2015 used only 39, mostly from native meadow and woodland plants. The pollen of wind-pollinated grasses and trees also appears frequently, with oak and sycamore being very important. Also surprisingly, the protein-rich spores and pollen of the lady fern *Athyrium* were found in 10% of samples nationally. We know that bees like geraniums (pollen found in 10% of samples), but they like golden rod and *Prunus* species a lot more (35% and 50% respectively). The whole study underpins the idea that just like humans, a balanced diet and access to a wide range of foods is best. It can also help tailor pollinator-friendly seed mixes. Also, as beekeepers we know that dandelions can be a critical resource for our bees in spring and if the weather is poor (found in 85% of samples). So if gardeners could avoid mowing the lawn in April, and plant the right fruit trees, this would be as helpful as planting a bee-friendly flower border (and much cheaper!) Finally, given the importance of hedgerow flowers such as hawthorn, wild rose, bramble and honey suckle, the briefing this April by the Soil Association is of particular concern. The expert panel reported that the prevalence of neonicotinoids in wild plants on field margins can be in higher concentrations than those found in the arable crops they border.

**Gillian Belben**

## Taking on Acute Paralysis Virus

Every cloud has a silver lining, well, that is what I was telling myself as Chris McClellan and I were doing the first manipulation of my bee hives. It was more of a hope than an expectation, but one that fingers crossed has come to pass.

I should start at the beginning. I started keeping bees about four years ago and have up until now had no great worries other than varroa. I have four poly-hives in the garden. I love watching the bees and most days I pop down the garden to check on them. One sunny day in early May I noticed that there were lots of bees clinging to the outside of one hive. Their behaviour worried me, some of them appeared to be shaking. On the grass in front of this hive there were lots of bees, some barely moving. All four hives had too many bees on the ground. I attended an apiary meeting at Quarr and mentioned my bees to Dave Cassell, who immediately thought of Acute Paralysis Virus. I have to say it hadn't entered my head, but then I read Mary Case's piece in the Spring 2016 Wight Bee; the description was all too familiar. Chris and Dave popped round and confirmed that it was almost certainly APV, but suggested that I phone Debbie Burton the Seasonal Bee Inspector.

Mary's article in Wight Bee explained in detail a possible course of action, this was confirmed by Debbie who told me that bee farmers on the mainland have had a lot of success using this method.

So this brings me back to the beginning of my tale. Over four days Chris and I cleared my hives of non-flying bees, dealing with one hive each day. First find the queen and pop her in a queen cage. Move the hive to one side and place a new hive containing three undrawn frames and the queen cage on the original's spot. Take the hive full of bees well away. The original article suggested a distance of 50 metres. Our garden is big, but not that big, so we actually moved it only about 15 metres. We shook and brushed the bees off the frames and onto a sheet laid on the ground. Many of the healthy bees flew straight back to the new hive on the original's site. Most of the frames were returned to their respective new hives. Not all the bees left on the sheet were unhealthy, so with Chris and me holding each

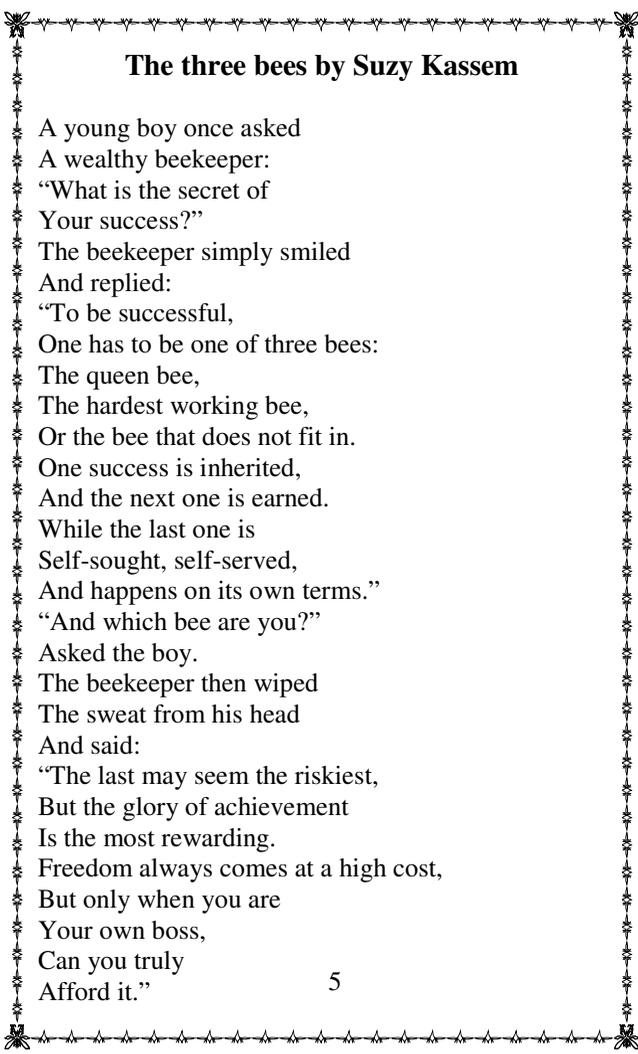
of the sheet we whipped it into the air leaving the healthy, flying bees airborne and able to return to their new hive. This however was a mistake, Debbie later explained that infected bees are able to fly back to the hive too. I have had to repeat this operation on two of the hives at Debbie's suggestion, this time making sure that the bees on the sheet were left on the sheet! Chris suggested that I feed the bees in the hives, which I did. I also replaced the frames from the supers with undrawn frames. The original frames, some heavy with honey, were marked and placed in my freezer. Debbie Butler noticed that my hives were quite badly infected with varroa and advised me to treat them with Apiguard. This done, I have now returned the original supers to their respective hives.



I am really happy to report that all four of my hives have bounced back, although there are still signs of the virus and I am still seeing bees on the ground in front of the hives, but in very much smaller numbers. I have also noticed that the virus looks very much worse on sunny days, when more of the bees are outside the hive on the alighting board. The silver lining? Well, I got to spend quite a lot of time with Chris, and in so doing have learnt a huge amount. My hives have been thoroughly

cleaned, (I was staggered at the number of wax moth larvae under the mesh screens). The hives have a new look, my husband has painted the alighting boards in different patterns which will hopefully reduce the chance of drifting. Finally, at Dave's suggestion I have given each hive more space. We are really lucky on this Island, there is such a good support network amongst the IWBKA , none of us have to try and cope on our own if we get out of our depth, and that was definitely what was happening to me.

**Jill Scutt**



**The three bees by Suzy Kassem**

A young boy once asked  
A wealthy beekeeper:  
“What is the secret of  
Your success?”  
The beekeeper simply smiled  
And replied:  
“To be successful,  
One has to be one of three bees:  
The queen bee,  
The hardest working bee,  
Or the bee that does not fit in.  
One success is inherited,  
And the next one is earned.  
While the last one is  
Self-sought, self-served,  
And happens on its own terms.”  
“And which bee are you?”  
Asked the boy.  
The beekeeper then wiped  
The sweat from his head  
And said:  
“The last may seem the riskiest,  
But the glory of achievement  
Is the most rewarding.  
Freedom always comes at a high cost,  
But only when you are  
Your own boss,  
Can you truly  
Afford it.”

## **Recipes with honey**

### **Honey and hazel nut cake**

From Elizabeth David's 'French Country Cooking' of 1951

Less a cake, more a soufflé eaten cold

8 oz runny honey

5 or 6 eggs

Teacup of plain flour

Teacup of ground hazel nuts

Teaspoon of caster sugar

Half a teacup of milk or cream

### **Method**

1. Beat the egg yolks in a large bowl and add the honey
2. Gradually add the flour, nuts and sugar
3. Bind all together with the milk or cream
4. Beat the egg whites still stiff and fold in to the mixture
5. Pour into a buttered cake tin or soufflé dish and bake for 40 minutes at 180C; turn out when cold.

This cake is equally delicious when made with walnuts.



www.shutterstock.com - 118345548

**Quarr Teaching Apiary**  
**August update**

What a season it has been at the teaching apiary! This year's new beekeepers have experienced the highs and lows of beekeeping, thanks to the vagaries of the weather and the unpredictability of the bees. The Association's decision to set up a teaching apiary has once again proved its usefulness in giving hands-on experience so that those who obtain their first nuc of bees, and who have been able to attend the practical sessions, cope extraordinarily well from the start. None of us on the team minds a call to come and check that everything is well with the colony when all that is needed is reassurance. The offer of cake is also a good incentive.

It has also been pleasing to welcome to the Saturday meetings new members who have not yet attended a theory course. This has necessitated "setting" those who attend by experience as it was mind-boggling both for those who had no knowledge and for me when I was demonstrating a method of making colony increase; just a touch too advanced for those who have never kept bees and a lesson in multi-tasking for me, fielding such a wide spectrum of questions while juggling two boxes of bees. At the next session, one of our newer beekeepers was handed a hive tool and asked to demonstrate examining a colony with the new members. Reluctant initially, he and another newish member did a great job; well done, Michael and Cassie. At these Association sessions, I really appreciate the support both of the regular team and those who pitch in to help at a moment's notice. It all helps with the variety of experience that is offered, and I'm pleased that numbers attending these meetings are increasing. We have also run two taster sessions recently with about seventeen people attending. These take the form of a little theory (me enthusing about bees and beekeeping, really) followed by opening some hives. We try to give people some background to the costs of setting up and suitable apiary sites, though the main thrust of the session is experiencing the bees. It's always fascinating to watch the initial reluctance to hold a frame changing to very vocal delight at the end of

the session when we unwind with a cold drink, a biscuit and lots of chat. The most frequent question is, "Do you ever get stung." The answer involves how it feels to be stung (initial ouch followed fifteen seconds later by OUCH as the sting takes effect followed by the itching) but that it's useful to have a decoy such as Dave or George around as they tend to get stung instead.

I've heard many reports of trouble with queens this season, and the teaching apiary has certainly experienced this. We started the season with eight colonies, one having died over winter. Last week we were down to five queen-right colonies as only one of our two artificial swarms worked, one new queen that emerged in early May completely failed to lay a single egg and three queens became drone layers, including, alas, the queen in the absurdly calm long hive. Last week we introduced queens to two of these in the hope that they will "take", and this week just went to take off supers from the active hives. We had previously piled two empty nucs on one hive stand, one of which had frames in, and went to move them when George commented that there seemed to be a lot of bees at the entrance, and not behaving in that, "oh-oh, busted!" way that robbers do. Sure enough, there was a colony with three beautiful frames of brood and a marked queen. We can only think that they have swarmed either from the long hive at some point or the Ent, the tree trunk hive. They will go in to a six frame poly nuc to overwinter. Hurrah!

**Liz Van Wyk**



*IWBKA Chairman Dave Cassell with a beautifully made comb from the well-mannered long hive at the teaching apiary.*

## Tanging the bees

About six months ago Paul Woolford and myself (Both IOW Beekeepers) gave an evening talk to Osborne Golf Club members, explaining how we've kept and maintained bees in Lady Wood on the golf course (to the right of the fifth green – for those IOW golfers). Below is a letter I received from Jennie Lake – nee Kimber recounting happy days “tanging” the bees and helping out with that number one favourite job of ours – extraction time.

**Ian King**

*“Thank you so much to you and Paul for the interesting talk you gave on Friday night at the golf club. For me it was a lovely trip down memory lane!*

*I had a lovely childhood growing up in the village of Newchurch. My father had a large garden growing all vegetables, had fruit trees so was the perfect spot for keeping bees. His friend a local farmer, also kept bees. We children didn't get involved that much except when a bit of noise was needed and then we were experts! I can remember that a swarm of bees had been seen in trees in the local churchyard and we were asked to go with my dad (Frank Kimber) and his friend (Gilbert Richards) armed*



*with wooden spoons and trays which we had to stand nearby and bang. I didn't know why until I spoke to you last Friday. They also had the gadget which you put newspaper into and set fire to it to be able to squeeze it like a bellows to puff smoke over the bees to make them quiet.*

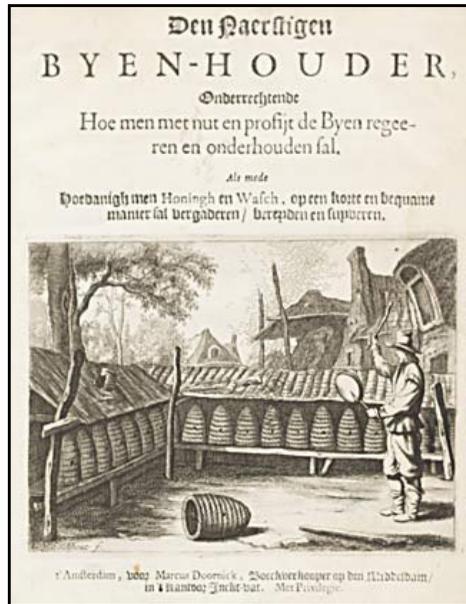
*They didn't seem to wear much protection, only a hat with the veil around. I think they had become hardened to bees stinging them over the years. The other thing I could remember was the spinning machine for extracting the honey from the comb. That was another thing that we children could do, in those days turning a handle rather than switching the electricity on and finally draining the honey through a large piece of muslin hanging from the low ceiling. It's so nice to know that some procedures have not changed that much over the years. These memories happened when I was about eight to ten years old so nineteen fifty three to fifty five. I hope you didn't see any resemblance to me in the 1880 picture you found!!*

**Does anyone know what this bug might be?**

Anita Jenkins found it on the floor of a hive that had died out over winter/spring. It must have got in before the mouseguards were added, and only the desiccated parts of wings and head remain. It was pretty big!



## Want to know more about tanging?



In this late 17th-century engraving from a book printed in Amsterdam, a swarm can be seen coming out of one of the straw hives or 'skeps' in the middle of the picture. A beekeeper stands to the right and hits what looks like a metal pan or drum in a procedure known as 'tanging'. Tanging would alert the neighbourhood that bees are swarming and its rhythmic sound would help coax the bees into the overturned hive in the foreground. This empty hive would also have been lined with honey in order to entice the bees to take up residence within it.

Tanging was also a way for a beekeeper to alert other beekeepers that a claim was being made on a found swarm. Acquiring new bees by laying claim to a swarm was important, as it was routine at this time for beekeepers to asphyxiate their bees with fumes from burning sulphur in order to access the honeycomb safely.

(This second purpose of tanging, to lay claim to a swarm, seems to me to be the most compelling argument for making lots of noise!)

**The art of swarm collection**  
**by A. Bumbler**

Just approaching the apiary when...I heard it...The VERY loud noise!!!  
Within an hour there were what I thought two swarms - one on each  
fence post. That's handy I thought...easily accessible...quick sweep  
straight into nuc, the smaller one first.

All went well ..very obliging bees.

Oops look at the time ...going out for lunch at 12.45...

Never mind got a while yet!

Same process with large swarm. Laid down sheet - into the skep you go,  
yippee! Turn skep upside down on sheet with edge propped up- great!

I turn to go and leave them to it.

Oh no !..wait a minute ..I go to look and there's still a large clump on  
the other side of the post!! They all decide to troop out of the skep and  
back up the post obviously missed queenie!

Never mind, fingers crossed they'll still be there when we get back and  
off to lunch we go.

Got back. Little darlings are still there, only looks like there are more of  
them.

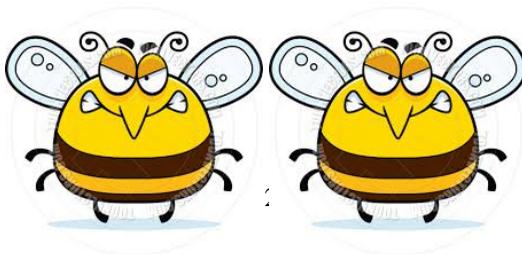
My fellow bumbler(Graham), comes to assist with this major task!

I hold skep, he brushes ..in you go you little buzzers! Tip them straight  
into brood box in three lots. A few expletives and apologies for  
language from G as he's stung twice on chin. Hopeless giggles from me  
and they're in. The rest meekly climbing up the sheet into the hive like  
little angels. Phew.

We go down at 8.30pm and move them round to their permanent  
(hopefully permanent) position. All buzzing contentedly.

Think it must have been one swarm on two posts, but who knows!

**Anita Jenkins**



## Landmarks and events of the Isle Of Wight—58

### An Interesting Memorial



Many interesting Island characters are buried in the Church of St Thomas, ,Newport, and none of the monuments there tell the story of a more interesting character than that of Sir Edward Horsey. His career began with an enforced exile to France for treasonable activities, and ended after he had been honoured with the title “Captain of the Isle of Wight”. During the reign of Queen Mary, a Queen who was opposed by many who did not support her Catholic views, Edward Horsey was one of a number of conspirators, led by the Earl of Dudley, whose treasonable plot to depose her was uncovered. The plotters then escaped and fled the country. Horsey lived in France for years and married a French wife but when Elizabeth came to the throne all was forgiven and he returned to England. His prowess as a soldier with French connections led to his preferment and by 1565 he was appointed Captain of the Isle of Wight and had moved to Haseley Manor with a local heiress called Dowsabell. A contemporary observed, “That he would have married her but for the fact that he already had a wife in France”. Sir Edward died of the plague in 1583. His tomb at one time held his invaluable *Sword of Office*. Early photographs show this sword in its scabbard but as the recent photo shows the scabbard is empty. For security reasons the bejewelled sword now resides in a local bank vault but there are plans to make it part of a secure display within the church.

**Rob Marshall**

# ★ THORNE SALE DAYS ★

WINDSOR ★ Saturday 3rd September 10.00am to 1.00pm ★

STOCKBRIDGE ★ Saturday 24th September 10.00am to 1.00pm ★

RAND ★ Saturday 15th October from 10.00am 10.00am ★



## Pre-orders now being taken

Our normal bargains will be available including; Frame Packs, Hive Parts and Accessories.

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](http://www.facebook.com/E.H.Thorne) or follow us on Twitter @ThorneBeehives



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*



**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.

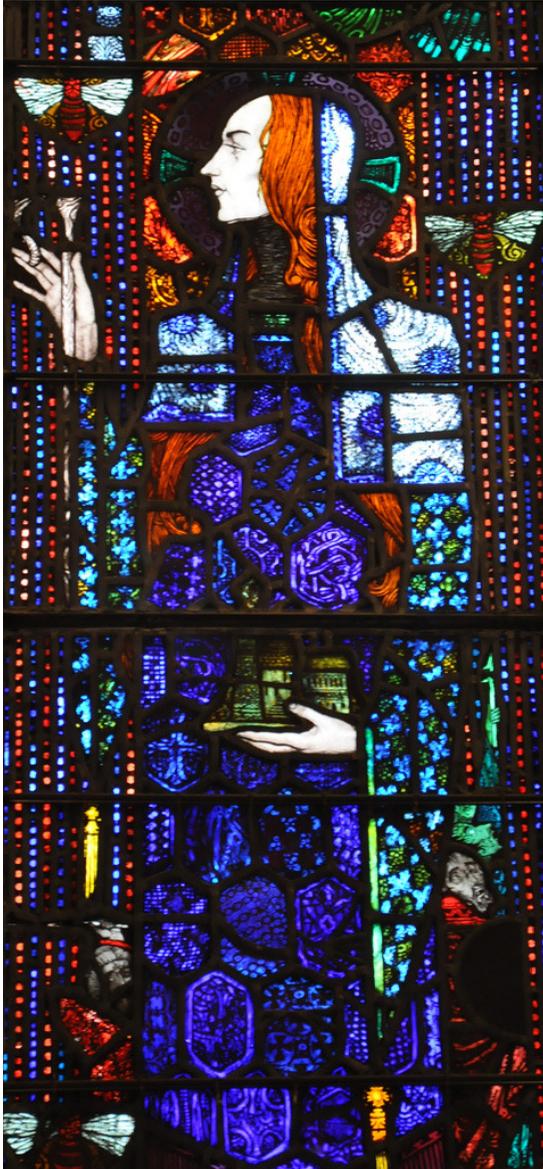
We offer special quotations for members of BBKA, Bee Farmers & all associations nationwide - you will find our prices competitive & our service efficient with a friendly touch.

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.

Thank you very much to the five members who contributed to this issue. You are rather special!

I apologise for the delay in issuing Wight Bee No 118. It should have been sent out at the end of July. This is partly due to the editor's tardiness, but it is also becoming very difficult to get contributions from the wider membership. Please help to keep this quarterly going.

## Who is the beekeeper's patron saint?



You may remember in our last issue that Saint Haralambos was a Bulgarian contender for this role. Now we have another claim in the form of Saint Gobnait of County Clare, Ireland, born in either the 5th or 6th century, and also known as Abigail or Deborah. Her Saint's Day is February 11th, the day after that of Haralambos.

Gobnait settled in Ballyvourney County Cork, and the use of honey to dress wounds when caring for the sick in a skill attributed to her.

Her connection to honey bees is complex, beginning with an angel telling her to find her "resurrection place," where the soul leaves the body. In Celtic mythology, the soul was thought to depart the body as a bee or a butterfly. Bees have long held an important place in Irish culture, and ancient laws were called the *Bech Bretha* ("Bee Judgments").

This stained glass window of Gobnait and her bees is in the Honan Chapel on the campus of University College Cork.

And the meaning of "bee" in Hebrew? - **Deborah**