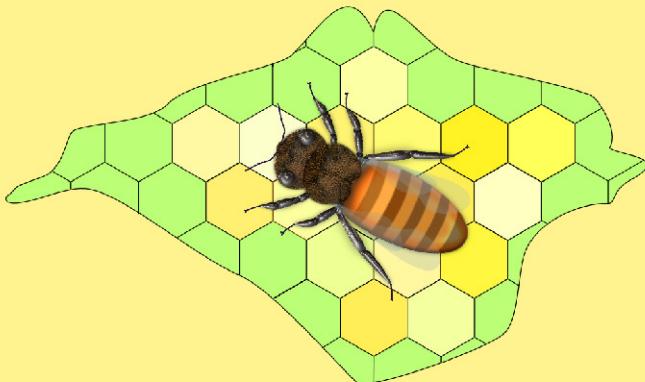


100th anniversary issue

The
Wight Bee



January 2012

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

Issue 100

My dear reader,

This little magazine may be quite unique! Because whether there will be further issues is entirely up to you, the membership of the Isle of Wight Beekeeper's Association. The idea came from your committee and, for reasons that are completely beyond me, they asked yours truly to be the editor!

Harry Carter, opening comments in the first issue of WB, Autumn 1985

The Journal of
The Isle of Wight Beekeepers Association
www.iwbka.org.uk

100th issue of the Wight Bee

Over the last 25 years the Wight Bee has been edited by Harry Carter, Cherry Burroughs, Mary Pain, Frankie Goodall and Rob Marshall. As editor of the inaugural issue Harry has written a short piece for us. Jinnie Bartlett, Stella Ridley and I have now completed our first full year as editors and had been looking forward to a celebratory theme for this 100th issue. Since Autumn 2011 however the IWBKA has lost three long-serving members, Joe Dawson, Ken Holland and Dave Button. You will find their obituaries in the centre pages. They will be sorely missed; highly respected and full of beekeeping lore, with skills built up over many years.

Elsewhere we have countered this sad news with a story about a future generation of beekeepers, young people who spent a day in summer enthusiastically learning about the craft.

Finally, you may notice that for the second time we have included a poem by the Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy. She has recently published a new book of poems called 'The Bees'. It's a lovely book and 'Telling the Bees' has been chosen in fond memory of Joe, Ken and Dave.

Gillian Belben

UK News

PLoS ONE is an international, peer-reviewed, open-access, online publication. A recently published paper entitled 'Multiple Routes of Pesticide Exposure for Honey Bees Living Near Agricultural Fields' contains the results of worrying research into neonicotinoid pesticides. You can read the whole paper here: <http://tinyurl.com/776y97v>

www.iwbka.org.uk

The IWBKA is undergoing a facelift. The address remains the same but by the end of February we should have existing and new information transferred to the new design. There will continue to be a Members area with a new way of accessing it. Registered members in 2012 will need to type in a user name (their surname) and a password (their postcode). Use lower case throughout. When you see the new branding on the homepage come up, the new way of accessing the members area will then be active.

Many thanks to Steve Fisher who has hitherto designed and looked after the site.

Telling the bees

When I went to read
the bulletin about broken holy beads
to the bees,
the beads were the bees themselves.....

(though once I'd been
a bairn with a bamboo cane,
keen to follow the beekeeper
down to the hives, tap and tell
all news—whose bride, who lied, who'd died—
and had seen the bees as a rosary, girdling,
garden by garden, the land;
or had heard their hard devotional sound
in the ears of flowers
as I barely breathed, beheld
their bold, intimate touch....)

for a scattered bracelet of bees
lay on the grass by their burgled hive.

So how could I tell the bees?

Black blood in the sea,
Corn buttercup brought to its knee.
No honey for tea.

Carol Ann Duffy



Bee Active

Children and bees, the thought of a mass of either can be a little daunting, but putting the two together, many thought the idea fraught with ‘issues’. Would the little two-legged species make too much noise, would they flap their hands and arms, would they be upset? Would the bees understand and not ‘bee’ angry? These and other questions crossed more than one mind.

But, what a glorious day was had on the 9th August. We met at Medham Farm in the morning and spent a little while getting to know each other, then Gill and Ruth took us through to look at an empty hive. They explained and demonstrated how the bees work the frames and the children were given lots of opportunities to ask questions and answer some that were put to them. The youngsters’ ages ranged from about two years to early teens and none were made to feel any different in age or experience. We all then donned suits for a visit to an inhabited hive. Even the littlest! How cute she looked in a suit that positively swamped her!

Ruth then led the entourage down the field. Once there she and Gill opened the hive and clearly showed how it functioned, the older ones expressed an interest in the working and management of a hive. The children were totally entranced and paid close attention, they ignored the bees flying about them except the little one in her Dad’s arms who just watched them approach and pass her whilst saying “ooooh, beeee!” with great excitement but no sign of fear.



The youngsters were shown how to identify the drones and workers and the highlight was when ‘Her Majesty’ put in an appearance and all the children were able to see her and how she differed from the other bees. Most of the children were fascinated with the bees landing on their own and each other’s suits. They posed questions about the ‘saddle bags’ of pollen and were able to see pollen already stored on the frames. Having spent about half an hour there, we all returned to the house and disrobed.



Being such a lovely day we sat on the lawn and ate our packed lunches, some of the children took round 'sharing' bowls and had a chance to talk to each other. After our repast Ruth allowed us all to make a mess inside her home as the children took the chance to make models and pictures of bee related items. The creations made were superb and what was so lovely to see was the interaction and help between the children who had previously never met.



Thanks to Gill Ballard for organising and co-ordinating the event; to Ruth Green at Medham Farm for hosting the event at her home; to all the grown-ups who bought their 'little ones', equipment and supplies for the creative activity and also for bringing cakes and snacks (most of which had been made using honey!); and to IWBKA Quarr training for the very good use of the children's suits – without which we would not have been able to get so large a group together - as many people do not have suits for the youngsters.

The feeling at the end of the day was: - that we all hoped this could and would be a regular event for the encouragement of tomorrow's grown-ups!

Jinnie Bartlett

From our first editor

All those years ago when I prepared the first copy of our association's own magazine I remember thinking to myself, "Is this the first and the last issue or is it what our members want?". Your support for the Wight Bee to the extent that it has reached its first century has shown that, yes you do want it, and I thank you for supporting it so well. In a way it has become a history book for IWBKA and I hope it continues to be so for many a year yet. I have lost count of the number of editors we have had but each one brought his or her own style increasing the interest of its contents.

Throughout the history of mankind the honey bee has always been held in high regard and rightly so because bees are so important to the well-being of our lives. Beekeeping brings together people from all walks and stations of life and when we are gathered around a hive we are all just beekeepers without rank or position. Surely beekeeping must be one of the best of hobbies; once you have got the equipment and a modicum of know-how it doesn't cost you anything – the bees will pay for it all! And look at the hours of pleasure it gives you out in the lovely summer weather – only a fool would try manipulating bees in bad weather! And look at all the interesting things you can try: Demereeing,

Taranoving, Snellgroving, artificially swarming – to name but a few. I've tried the lot and made them work and if you haven't done so then have a go in 2012 its great fun.

Happy beekeeping and try not get all the door knobs in the house sticky with honey or you'll be out of favour with other members of the household (I know from experience!).

Harry Carter



Ideas for Bee Gardening

By Jinnie Bartlett (novice beekeeper and gardener!)

Happy New Year! For gardening, the weather being mild has allowed for garden tidying. There is still time to plant bare rooted trees, if the ground is not frozen or too wet. It's time now to really take stock of what is in your potting space, shed or whatever; clean trays, pots and growing medium i.e. compost. This year I am going to try sowing my seeds into vermiculite (it's a creamy coloured clay medium used by horticulturists) as previous attempts ended up with 'damping off' where the stems rotted and the poor plants keeled over. Wish me luck! Prepare the greenhouse or (in my case) clear the window ledges ready to take the trays of seedlings or 'plug' plants for growing on, so as to have good sturdy plants ready to put in the garden as soon as the last frosts are gone.

Remember when planting: 'One for the mouse, one for the crow, one to rot, one to grow' especially when planting peas and beans. Talking of these, I for one used to collect all the produce and either ate it fresh or froze it, till last year, that is, when we left some to create our seeds for this year. I also left other things to go to seed – like the herbs, having learnt how much the bees like them in flower and then I get the seeds, it seems like a good deal to me. This just means taking a crop of young tasty tops and letting the plant re-shoot and flower. Tidy and shape by pruning perennial herbs like sage after flowering or in the autumn; or with mint for example clip close to the ground just above the buds as they emerge in spring.

Don't forget when buying seeds and plants this year - bees like simple open flowers like daisies and/or those with lots of little flowers such as lavender, heather and clover.

Must go, just decided get some Echinops (globe thistle) and Echinacea seeds to plant now and grow on, as these will look good together in the front border. If there's a surplus – it'll be a 1st come scenario.

Joe Dawson

Joe will be remembered with affection by all who knew him. He was one of our longest serving members and was a popular president. During his presidential office he organised a memorable Christmas beekeepers feast with Indian cuisine. He came from India to work in the UK as an engineer. He moved to the Island and at one time he contributed to the Black Knight Space rocket project. A generous host, he often welcomed a vast crowd of members to visit his home in Newport. Visits to his apiary always aroused a great deal of comment. He had a vast assortment of hives and equipment , many of which showed a great degree of constructional ingenuity.

A swarm catcher par excellence, he was regularly called upon to clear the streets of Newport from vagrant swarms. His experience here dated back to his first attempt when he managed to secure the cluster in the only receptacle available, an old cardboard box.

At our auctions Joe could be relied upon to purchase those unconsidered trifles which other bidders had disregarded. After our most recent visit to King's Villa in 2009, a report on the day said:-

"Joe is an ingenious constructor and a repair genius who radiates cheerfulness in his unconventional apiary. Hives that others may have despised bear witness to the rule that bees can be perfectly happy in hives that do not appear be in the first flush of youth ".

A committed Christian, Joe's affection for his fellow man was obvious to all. We shall miss him.

Ken Holland

Ken Holland joined IWBKA in the early fifties and for over sixty years has done more for the association than any other. When he joined he was still recovering from the traumatic times he endured as a Japanese POW. His memories of those experiences were so painful that he was reluctant to talk about them.

Ken was an accountant by profession. Very soon after he joined our association he offered to take over as treasurer and he held this office for an astounding forty years. He shouldered his duties with typical good humour but his skills were taxed in the early days when our auctions were breaking new ground and difficult customers occasionally broke the rules.

He inherited beekeeping skills from his father who was a noted beekeeper in Bedfordshire. Very much a traditionalist, his hives were mostly of National design. His home apiary often consisted of one hive as his garden was not suitable for a larger number, but over the years he ran out-apiaries across the Island.

Always anxious to get good value for Island beekeepers, Ken once borrowed a

pickup truck to collect a bargain consignment of honey jars from the mainland. He brought back so many jars that the ferry operators complained and the ferry departure was delayed as the truck was overloaded!

Professionally Ken worked for the County Council and when computers were introduced he was selected to learn the necessary skills to operate the new punched card monster. The task was formidable and as it sometimes involved working through the night Ken hated it. It explains why in later years he was no friend of the current computer culture.

Ken has been a close friend of mine for over half a century. Conversation with him was always, wide ranging, intelligent, thoughtful and cheerful. We shall all miss his company.

Rob Marshall

Dave Button

There is so much that could be said about Dave but it would take a long while. I am proud to say that I was a friend of Dave. In fact Dave was my friend from the first day we met. It was my first day as an IWBKA member, and was my first experience with bees. It was a bee auction at Roslin Barns and Dave had been asked to sort out this “Newbee” by my mate Brian Holden who could not be present.

I think I was a thorn in Dave’s side that day (not quite how he would have put it – he always called a spade a spade!), as he was busy doing “Committee things” and kept being interrupted by this idiot who wanted to keep bees.

I ended up buying the pretty WBC hive and bees, much against Dave’s advice, but he and Rob Marshall helped me get it into my car boot to get it home. Dave followed me and helped unload and install it, and was amused at me wanting to keep bees with no bee suit as yet.

That day Dave passed on to me his extraordinary ability to get stung and for this Dave, I thank you. It has stayed with me ever since. It was never unusual for Dave to greet you at the door with a bright red shiny nose explaining how “those devils” had “bleached” him earlier.

When Quarr Abbey showed a renewed interest in beekeeping some years ago, they purchased a hive at auction. Dave Button and Dave Parr helped the monks with the transportation of the hive. Bro. Robert asked Dave B if he thought the bees would do well on their new site. “Should do!” said Dave. “After all, It is constipated ground!”

We did a lot of beekeeping together in my early years and we found that we had a lot in common with our childhood walks and pastimes around Shanklin, even though Dave’s experiences were over 15 years ahead of mine.

My mother and father were very ill in August 2002. – I received a phone call

from Dave one Friday night asking how much honey I had taken off. I replied NONE! as I had been too busy.

"Thought so!" he said. I'll come over to your place about 8:30 and we'll do it tomorrow. We worked all day and into the evening and with Helen's help extracted over 500 lbs. This was typical of Dave. -- always willing to help out friends in trouble. He was so generous with sharing his time and expertise.

Dave joined the IWBKA in 1986 although he had tinkered with bees in the early part of his life as his father kept hives. Dave was an excellent beekeeper and was rewarded with large honey crops, stored in buckets up to the ceiling in his garage.

He was the winner of the Douglas Roberts Memorial Cup an amazing 8 times and the Claude Cooper Challenge Cup 7 times. Both awards requiring a high level of dedication & expertise.

His work with wax and candles was second to none and several times persuasion was tried to get him to enter for the National Honey Show. He thought this was too much fuss with all the packing of exhibits and so on.

The IW Beekeepers Association was a big part of Dave's life. He served in Committee for many years. Several auctions were held in his garden—the more recent ones had a hidden agenda. Dave was selling a lot of his excess stock and he said that he would not have to transport it too far.

Dave is one person I have met that I can truly say I have heard nobody speak ill of. That in itself is a tribute to the great man he was and will be remembered as. I, along with many others, will miss him so very much.

Dave Cassell

Honey Show 5th November 2011

Well, what can I say but wow! In the weeks leading up to the honey show I realised there would be a few more entries than other years but I wasn't prepared for our biggest show yet with 52 entrants and 185 entries.

It was so good to see lots of different people taking part for their first time and especially nice to see so many of our new members getting involved in their first year by entering or helping.

I think everyone who was involved or came along would agree it was a very interesting show and a lovely day was had by all, even if we were a bit tight on space!!! A new venue may have to be considered for the future so if anyone has any suggestions please let me know.

A very big thank you to everyone who helped I really appreciate all your time and effort without which it would not be possible to organise and stage the show.

Also a big thank you and well done to everyone who entered and took part, without you we wouldn't have a show and last but not least a big thank you to everyone that came along on the day and gave us support as without you there would be little point to the show.

I would also like to mention that I was very touched by all the messages I received by phone, emails, letters and cards. Each and every one was very, very much appreciated and really did make all the hard work worth it, thank you.

Gill Ballard, Honey Show Secretary

Prize winners

The Robert's Memorial Trophy	Dave Cassell
The Virginia Ford Trophy	Natalie Mumberson
The Claude Cooper Memorial Trophy	Dave Cassell
The Ray Fitchett Award	Mary Case
The Reg Gallop Trophy	Derek Sothcott
Rosette for Novice class	Richard Haynes
Rosette for Best in Show	Dave Cassell
Rosette for 12 jars Honey	Dave Cassell
Rosette for Cookery & Presentation	Mick Dunn
Rosettes for Junior Award ages 3-7	William Stiles
Rosettes for Junior Award ages 9-13	Milo Van Dam
Most Popular Honey	John Jones

Established 2000

Bwear

Beekeeping Clothing

Made in the UK



BB1



*Starter Kits with BB1/RR1 and BB501/RR501
BB1/RR1 with FREE leather gloves*

**Both hoods interchangeable Hood throws back when not in use
Made-to-measure Service**

SEND FOR FREE CATALOGUE



RR501

BBwear Ltd., 1 Glyn Way, Threemilestone, Truro, Cornwall, TR3 6DT Tel/Fax: 01872 273693
Email: mike.bb1@btinternet.com www.bbwear.co.uk

Recipes with honey

Orange honey butter

One part softened butter

One part creamed or warmed honey

Finely grated orange zest to taste

Cream the butter and honey, mix in the orange zest.

A perfect breakfast spread with croissants or warm rolls.

This is best made just before serving, but can be kept in the fridge for a while.



Landmarks of the Isle Of Wight

The Brisbane Pillar (40)



Sir Thomas Brisbane lived for a while in Ventnor in the eighteen eighties. A keen astronomer, he applied to the authorities for permission to place a pillar on the Ventnor esplanade. It was to have a dual function, the first to establish by astronomical observation, the exact global position of a site in Ventnor. The second aim was to denote, in conjunction with stone markings, an accurate indication of the exact time at noon each sunny day. Permission was given in 1851 and the pillar with its capped metal gnomon is there till this day.

Modern technology has rendered this monument obsolete but in the days before radio time checks existed, it would have been of great value to the town. Using only the chronometers available to him, his latitude and longitude position is remarkably close to the Global Position figures available today.

Sir Thomas had an interesting career. A Scottish landowner, he had enlisted in the British army and served under the Duke of Wellington in the Spanish Peninsular War with the rank of Brigade Commander. In 1821 he went to Australia as Governor of New South Wales. When the neighbouring state of Queensland was established, the capital Brisbane, was named after him. He is remembered in Australia as a gifted astronomer and the Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium which he founded still bears his name and has its own interesting web site.

Rob Marshall,

Who is indebted to Fay Brown for much of the detail in this article

Farmer Jacks Farm Shop

A fine selection of local and speciality foods

Butchery

Freshly prepared cuts of local meat poultry & game

Delicatessen

Cheeses, pates, olives, cured meats & many other delicacies

Food Hall

Fresh fruit, vegetables, bread & dairy produce

Assorted accompaniments to complement any meal

Good honest food from the heart off the island

Arreton Old Village Main Rd Arreton PO30 3AA

Tel: 01983 527530 www.farmerjacks.co.uk

Beginner's Blog, Winter 2011/12

And so to bed! Or so it should have been for the bees. However the strangely mild weather and consequent late Autumn has confused them, and mine were flying well into December. Nor have they clustered yet, as I found to my surprise the other day, cold and dim, when I could see and hear no signs of life and blew gently into the entrance. A number of bees shot out with a roar and I ran for it, reflecting on what a silly thing I had just done! Doubly silly, as I knew they were alive, I have a laser temperature probe and had already established that the hive temperature was well above the outside air temperature, and there were no dead bees to be seen. However the late activity has given cause for concern - it's hard to judge stores by hefting when you have little experience to measure it by, and I suspect they may have used much of their supplies. Fortunately I had put a container of fondant above them, along with a thick layer of insulation, and on checking this on a warm day I could see that there was still a little left, so they can't be desperate yet. However I shall make up another batch of fondant to have in hand for later in the Winter, just in case. Very easy to do, but a sugar thermometer really helps, this is how: 1kg granulated sugar, half a pint of water, a tablespoon of liquid glucose. Heat the water, sugar and glucose together until the sugar has dissolved, bring to the

(continued on next page)

compak

Suppliers of Glass and Plastic Containers & Closures

The Home of our "Quality British made Honey Jar"

Our standard 1lb Honey Jars are made to our own specifications in quality glass.

We specialise in supplying many associations including members of BBKA & Bee Farmers Association. Our prices for large and small orders are very competitive and we can arrange deliveries nationwide.

For further details on our Honey Jars or any of our other products, please get in touch with our Sales Team, we'll be pleased to hear from you.



Compak (South) Ltd
3, Ashmead Road
Keynsham
Bristol

BS31 1SX

Tel : 01179 863 550

Fax : 01179 869 162

Email : sales@compaksouth.co.uk

Website : www.compaksouth.com

boil and boil to 240f, no further. Put the pan containing the boiling syrup carefully into a sink of cold water and stir with a flat wooden spatula as it cools, keeping it going as it becomes stiffer and more awkward. Turn out this mass onto a cold work top or silicone sheet if you have one, and keep turning and pressing with two wooden paddles until it has cooled enough to be able to handle it. Then knead it like bread dough until it is cool, smooth and silky. I put it into a used but clean Chinese take-away container and just unlid and invert over the hole in the crownboard to feed.

(continued on next page)



E.H.THORNE (Beehives) LTD

Manufacturers of Beehives and Beekeeping Equipment since 1913

Follow us Facebook www.facebook.com/ehthorne

THE HEDGE COE HIVE

Made from waterproof and marine ply

Each hive comprises:

- Empty 14" x 12" Brood Body with top bee space
- Insulated cover
- Mesh tray floor
- Four easily removable legs
- Two empty BS Supers with top bee space
- Wet and Dry feeders
- Simple sloping roof
- Half Brood Body and Accessory Box



£240

For more information visit our website

E.H.THORNE (Beehives) LTD
BEEHIVE BUSINESS PARK, RAND, Nr. WRAGBY, LINCS, LN8 5NJ
TEL. 01673 858555 FAX. 01673 857004
sales@thorne.co.uk www.thorne.co.uk



To insulate the hive I bought a small sheet of 5cm thick solid loft insulation from B&Q, and cut this into two pieces to fit, with a cut-out the size of the fondant container in one. This sits nicely under a deep roof, or you can do as I did and make a simple eke to hold the insulation as my roofs are rather shallow.

I'm glad I strapped the hive when I put on the mouse-guard, I am visited by badgers in the garden and found claw-marks on the side of the hive one morning. There's been no recurrence so I am hoping that they have lost interest, but I shall keep the strap on through the Winter just in case. Now is not the time to lose the bees to a marauder!

In a normal Winter I guess I should be able to ignore the bees, this year with Spring flowers already out I don't think anyone can judge what is going to happen, or when. Some beekeepers on the mainland have really active hives and think the Spring build-up has already begun!

Stella Ridley

EST. 1959



ISLAND HONEY

NET. 453G. 1LB

Gillian Belben

3 Sheat Cottages, Chillerton, Isle of Wight PO30 3EW

IWBKA Honey Labels

Number 5 —Gillian Belben

A friend called Paul Khera designed this label for me in 2009, just before I came back to live on the Island. We had spent some time looking around the very trendy and expensive Daylesford organic produce shop in London, and noticed firstly that while they had a huge array of English honeys, the labels were all rather traditional and tended towards the gold, yellow and brown variety. (Secondly, none of it should have been in the shop at all, since it must be pretty impossible to produce organic honey in England—but that's another story).

We chose colours that were untypical and hopefully would stand out. The wording is deliberately off-centred, to encourage someone to pick the jar up and turn it around in order to read everything. Because I inherited the bees from my father David when he died in 2005, I thought it would be nice to recognise his many long years of beekeeping with the date he was given his first swarm in 1959. As a family we have been keeping bees and collecting honey for 52 years.

On the back of the jar I placed a much smaller label specific to each batch, showing the collection and best before dates.

I have been told than the label does not conform to recommended standards; some of the print is very small, and you can't see the key information in its entirety without turning the jar, which was what I wanted in the first place! Also, because Paul based the design on the original label my father used, the new label has inherited the 'incorrect' metric weight for one pound—453 grammes rather than 454. I have since been told than in the olden days 453 grammes was 'correct'. Finally, I've always liked the way Islanders refer to 'The Island' rather than the Isle of Wight, assuming that everyone knows which island they are going to, or coming from. So it's Island Honey of course, the only and best island.