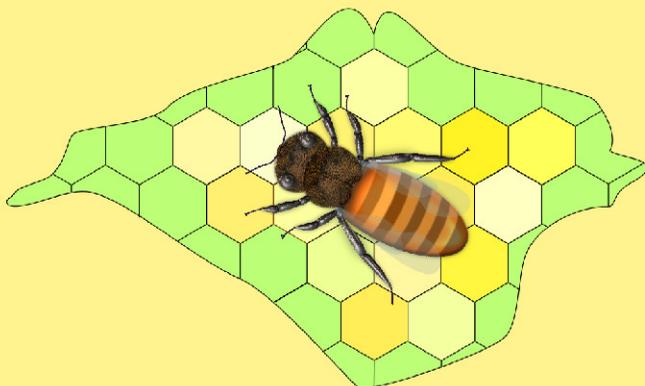


The  
Wight Bee



July 2014

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

Issue 110

'As we draw up our National Pollinators Strategy for publication later in the year, we will look at this report with interest. This Government is determined to do all that it can to help bees and pollinators flourish'

**DEFRA commenting on the Pollinator and Pesticides Report by MPs on the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) - a report at odds with Government.**

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

### **Bee Safari with Seasonal Bee Inspector Debbie Burton on June 7th**

A second successful bee safari organised by Chris McClellan took place on June 7th. Safaris are designed for people with only 1 or 2 hives who would like advice or assistance. This year 6 apiaries were visited during the day. Other members accompanied the inspector.

Debbie helped with queries and showed how to examine for signs of brood disease and varroa. She also made general observations and offered suggestions to help improve bee management skills.

The following accounts are from the 6 volunteer hosts.

#### **Tony Marvin at Whitwell**

After a very wet start at the Abbey and a short visit to the Ryde allotments it was down south to Dean Farm near Whitwell where the sun was of course shining. I have two hives in the orchard part of the garden by the farmhouse. One hive was a split from the other and the original started life as a nuc from Liz at the Ryde allotments apiary.

In the first hive, which has the original queen from last year, Debbie pointed out the rather random laying pattern and chalk brood at the "pre-chalk" stage. At this stage it is not obvious and I had wondered why there were empty cells scattered amongst the sealed brood. All in all possibly a queen weakening.

The second hive was about 3 weeks post swarming with a virgin queen who had shown no sign of laying yet. There were a lot of polished cells! Debbie suggested leaving it another week and then consider a test frame from the other hive.

I made my own notes and then it was on to the next stop. For me this safari is one of the most valuable learning tools in the calendar.

#### **Guy Mattinson at Whitwell**

I received my first nuc in April. Things have developed so much quicker than I had expected. I think I have got a good queen who is a good layer. My colony therefore ran out of space very quickly and started to create queen cells. I had split the colony two weeks prior to Debbie's visit and was concerned the one colony had no new eggs, at the time

Of her visit and was concerned the one colony had no new eggs. It was as if I was feeling my way around in the dark. Debbie's visit gave me a huge amount of confidence, assuring me there were signs the cells were being polished in preparation for the new queen to lay. She pointed out signs of bald brood and varroa, which was extremely helpful. I am now hugely relieved the new queen has started to lay.

### **Keith Joyce at Chale Green**

My original one hive of bees had contracted chronic bee disease virus in 2012 with hundreds of bees dying daily, this carried on until June 2013 when the advice of a friend in the IWBKA was to destroy them and start again.

Instead we did a shook swarm and re-queened the hive, from that time on they just flourished and just prior to the Bee Safari I had taken a nuc but they decided to swarm anyway. The queen having a clipped wing ended up under the hive with her bees. This I only discovered a few days later so I amalgamated them with the nuc. In the process of this the queen disappeared, also I had cut out all the queen cells in my main hive in an attempt to stop them swarming, so at the time of the Bee Safari I had two queenless hives with no brood to inspect.

In spite of this Debbie Burton was very helpful with her insight and advice as she inspected my hives and I trust everyone who came found it as interesting and helpful as I did.

### **Roger Hall at Whitecroft Park**

As a novice bee keeper I was far from sure what to expect. I felt a sense of trepidation, with all those experienced bee keepers looking over my shoulder not to mention the bee inspector from DEFRA. Was this to be a bee Ofsted inspection? Would I be put in 'special measures'?

None of it, however. I visited all but the last apiary and what an informative and fascinating day this was, seeing different apiaries, different hives and seeing actual evidence of a few pests such as chalk brood and deformed wing syndrome, as well as a drone laying queen and a queenless colony. For the novice there is nothing to equal seeing

these things in real life rather than from the pages of a book. The highlight was the inspection of my own 2 hives. Both were given a clean bill of health and it was really encouraging to receive such comments as 'she is laying like a train', classic rugby ball pattern and, from Christine over my shoulder, 'you should get some honey from this one this summer'.

Certainly for the novice the safari is an opportunity not to be missed – a day immersed in bee knowledge which cannot be equalled.

### **Arthur Waddams at Noke Common**

My hives were inspected for tropical diseases and luckily none were found. On inspection of my original wooden hive it was noticed that I had a queen cell and was advised to get rid of it. In another hive there was a drone layer which also contained food. I was advised to put this in the freezer for a later date when food was needed, after taking off the drone larvae. I was also advised to put in a frame of eggs so that a new queen could be drawn off, this was a successful operation and the hive is now doing very well.

I found the whole day very interesting and informative and gained some very good advice.

### **Jim and Sarah Souter at Cowes**

We were extremely interested to see what Debbie and the gang had to say about our colonies this year as we had only had the first colony in place for a month prior to last years visit and we believe at that time we were the only ones on the island with a Beehaus rather than a traditional hive setup. During the weeks leading up to this year's visit we had suffered with a number of swarms from the primary colony and had set up two additional colonies, it was fascinating to watch people's reactions to how the colonies had developed and Debbie's help in marking the new queens while she was with us was invaluable. As always Debbie has left us with a challenge and this time it is to have honey harvested and ready for tasting next year!

**Recipes with honey**  
**Goats cheese and honey salad**

4 handful of rocket leaves  
200g of soft goats cheese  
1 tablespoon of runny honey  
Salt and black pepper  
Olive oil  
Lemon juice

Serves 4

**Method**

Divide the rocket between 4 plates.  
Break the cheese into rough pieces and place on the leaves.  
Drizzle with honey, a squeeze of lemon and season with salt and pepper. Finish with a splash of olive oil.



**Report on the Quarr Teaching Apiary Meeting on May 31st**

As May was Bee Health Month, we focused on varroa. The NBU had sent out an email saying that beekeepers were reporting high varroa levels thanks to the mild winter and that a mite drop of 5 or more a day requires urgent action. We checked the boards that had been in for a week and, fortunately found hardly any, perhaps a result of the various treatments we carry out. Sugaring and the use of Hiveclean were demonstrated as interim measures. Several colonies were thoroughly examined and the results of a shook swarm a few weeks earlier showed how well and how quickly a colony can recover as the brood pattern in this colony is textbook. At the next meeting at Quarr, we hope to show the two top bar hives, the long hive and the Warre.

**Liz Van Wyk**

**A jar of honey**

**Jacob Polley**

You hold it like a lit bulb,  
a pound of light,  
and swivel the stunned glow  
around the fat glass sides:  
it's the sun, all flesh and no bones  
but for the floating knuckle  
of honeycomb  
attesting to the nature of the struggle.

**Report on visit to Mary Case's apiary at Limerstone Farm**

The visit took place on June 15th, before we realised quite how long, hot and dry the summer was about to be, although for Mary the year was already set to produce a vintage harvest, and she was beginning to run out of equipment. The scale hive was later reported to have added 11lb in weight in a single day.

Mary had brought 60 hives through the winter on a variety of sites and was now building new colonies fast.

An artificial swarm was demonstrated, and the reasons for putting test frames of eggs into hives explained. This was one of the most useful lesson learned by Mary when she was a novice. The test frame may simply trigger a newly mated queen to start laying. If bees start

building a queen cell on the frame it will confirm to the beekeeper that the hive is queen-less.

(report continued on page 11)

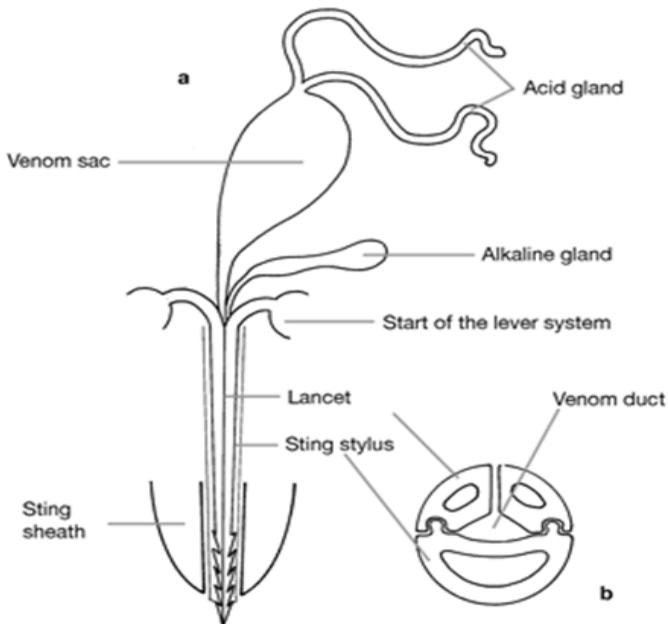
## Micro Bee Study Group—Part 4

### The Sting in the Tail

Perhaps the biggest reason beginners drop out from our fascinating interest is the sting – a painful experience some do not wish to repeat.

Of our three castes; drone, worker and queen, only the females sting.

The queen can and does sting, normally within her colony to other queens; there have been cases of queens stinging beekeepers, although this is only on bee breeders who rear and handle large numbers of queens – and who therefore smear their fingers with high concentrations of queen pheromone. The queen's lancets do have barbs although these are much blunter than the workers, and she is able to withdraw her lancets without harming herself.



Venom Bulb and Umbrella Valve removed for clarity

Venom is produced from the venom or acid glands, these glands are only active in nurse bees up to the age of 14 days, after that period the venom sac has been filled and the glands degenerate (1 -7 day old nurse bees cannot sting). All worker and queen bees older than 14 days have a full capacity of venom.

The sting mechanism is a combination of two lancets both ending in barbed tips and a stylus, which incorporate two rails, which allow the Left and Right lancets to slide (saw) up and down; this sawing action of the lancets pushes the barbed lancets into the victim and pumps the venom from the bulb (not shown in the diagram) down the venom duct into the victim. The sawing action exposes the stung area to a larger portion of venom than would be the case with a sharp hypodermic-type needle. This allows both the venom a larger area to react, and allows the alarm pheromones in the sting to be spread and picked up by other bees – hence multi-stings on the gloves once stung.

If the bee is stinging other insects it is able to withdraw its lancets, and continue to sting until the venom sac/bulb has been emptied.

It is only when the bee stings a thicker-skinned mammal that the barbed lancet remain in the wound. When the bee tries to retract her sting from the tough skin the barbs ensure that the sting remains embedded, as a result the weak membranes attaching it to the sting chamber and spiracle plates are ripped away, allowing the bee to fly away, but dying within a few days.

### **Dealing with stings:**

Most people when stung show **mild/moderate reaction** to the histamine released by the body into the bloodstream, and taking an anti-histamine tablet will remove most of the symptoms, skin rash – tingling mouth – itchy runny nose.

Others can show **Anaphylaxis and Severe Allergic Reactions** to the sting, swelling of the tongue – difficulty in swallowing/speaking – difficult or noisy breathing – dizziness/collapse/loss of consciousness.

Once a severe reaction has been noted immediately dial 999 for an ambulance; if available, an injection of a medicine called [adrenaline](#) should be given if someone is having breathing difficulties, feeling faint, or has lost consciousness due to suspected anaphylaxis.

**Ian King**

## **Island beekeeper interview**

### **Anita Jacobs**

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

My first encounter with a bee was quite a painful one, I was very young and found a bumble bee fascinating, unfortunately it didn't like being played with and I got stung. I gave all insects a wide berth after that and it wasn't until 2009 when Vectis Road Allotment Association (VERA) suggested creating an apiary that I began to become more aware of these little pollinators.

#### **What tempted you into bee-keeping at first?**

I have to admit, becoming a bee-keeper was not on my, things to do, wish list, but after being nominated apiary manager for the allotment bees, I was happy to take on the challenge of trying something new along with gaining more knowledge on the issues that are affecting honeybees

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

The IWBKA and its leading members were of enormous help, from advising on the apiary site to responding to any issue that occurred, nothing was too much trouble, and the event weekends organized by the association and its members are invaluable, there is always something new to learn.

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

National hives work to our best advantage at the allotments. With clear crown boards and back viewing panels, members and invited guests can take a look at what's going on inside the hive without disturbing the bees, which can be quite unnerving if anyone hasn't experienced the buzz of a hive full of bees when their home is being opened up. The viewing panels have also been a great way for young children to get up close to the hives, especially if they are a bit nervous, it gives them an opportunity to become more confident around bees.

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

Within a matter of days after completing Terry Willis' course back in 2009, it was straight into bee keeping by collecting our first swarm; from then on it's been a bit of a roller-coaster ride, with highs of spotting and

marking queens, harvesting the first honey, and getting my brother to video a swarm that had appeared when we first started the apiary, going into a hive, (see [veraveg.org](http://veraveg.org) web page) to the lows of watching a swarm you've hived two days earlier fly off, and losing a colony to the paralysis virus, which debilitated the bees to such an extent that they had to be destroyed.

This was such an awful event to deal with that reservations on continuing with the apiary were contemplated, but the amount of support received for the bee project to continue was just the encouragement we needed to redevelop the apiary area in readiness for three gifted colonies, which we received earlier this year.

Since then we have been as busy as the bees, with several swarms of golden bees arriving one after another, giving VERA's new bee keeper member her first experience of collecting and hiving a swarm, while our own colonies are healthy and continuing to make good progress

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

Watching the first hiving of a swarm, its still amazing to watch as they all march into the hive.

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

Follow the advice below, which was given at the bee-keeping classes. Don't wear black, especially socks if you don't have wellies and make sure all zips are fully closed. Listen to your bees, all colonies are different and will transmit audible pulsation messages, these will alert you to any issues within your apiary.

**What has been your worst bee-keeping mistake?**

Wearing black and not zipping up properly. Bees will find the smallest opening and they definitely **don't** like black

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

Managing long term health issues is a challenge in itself, fortunately the apiary is an allotment project with other members involved and as a team this works really well.

**What other aspects of your life are important and enjoyable to you?**

Family, friends, becoming a grandparent for the first time 18 months ago, (best Christmas present ever), my cat, good food, a glass of alcoholic beverage now and again, music, listening to the rain, a good thunderstorm, watching the waves ...., enjoy every moment, good or bad and having a laugh every day keeps the wrinkles away.

**What is the most surprising thing that others might like to know about you?**

Going back a few years, I was fortunate in being able to attend Osborne House as a volunteer gardener for English Heritage and was privileged to have been included in a tour of High Grove Gardens. It was a lovely day out, even though we didn't get to see Prince Charles talking to his plants!

**What are your beekeeping hopes and plans for the future?**

There is the potential to expand and include an assortment of themes connected to bee-keeping and other pollinating insects and the roles they play. However, just to keep the allotment apiary going for as long as we can would be an achievement in itself.

(report from Limerstone apiary continued from page 6)

An extremely useful method of removing honey was discovered by some of the newer members. Capped frames can be removed, brushed clear of bees and put in a covered super, one by one, rather than trying to take off the whole super using a clearing board. This gives us much more control over the collection and extraction process.

The group moved to the dairy where uncapping, spinning, filtering and storing large quantities of honey were demonstrated. The use of food grade plastic bags as inserts to storage buckets was recommended. These keep the buckets clean. An added tip for when the honey is warmed prior to bottling, is to lift the bag up and empty it by snipping off a bottom corner. Unwanted wax foam etc. is thus left on the sides of the bag.

The very full car park in the field opposite attested to the popularity of this apiary visit, confirmed by the quality of the tea and cakes. Many thanks to Mary and Geoff Case for this. Finally, the informal auction of equipment raised £138 for the IWBKA.

**Gillian Belben**

## Landmarks and events of the Isle Of Wight—50

### The Chequers Inn, Rookley



Sited high on the windswept and isolated tract of land known fittingly as Bleak Down and with no hamlet nearby, the Chequers Inn does not appear to be in a ideal trading position. There is little doubt that smuggling paid some part in its early days and its isolated position brought with it some benefit.

At a time when the south coast of the island was regularly used to land illicit goods, the route to the populated parts of the island passed this way and such an isolated staging post would have been useful. In time a customs office was set up here in an attempts to disrupt the supply line. Known at that time as “The Star”, the inn is mentioned in the Godshill parish records for the first time in 1799. Written records tell of a succession of landlords and in 1890 the Reynolds Family began a long tenancy. The name was soon changed to its present one as there was some confusion with the neighbouring inn at Chale, also called the Star. Various suggestions have been advanced for the adoption of the Chequers name, one being that a “Chequers Tree” grew on the site.

Two sisters, Isobel and Mary Reynolds ran the pub for nearly sixty years. Known as Bella and May and stories abound about their time here.

For a while the establishment sank into the doldrums and at one time, the owners, Whitbread, lost interest and closed it prior to sale. Fortunately Sue and Richard Holmes purchased the site in 1989 and from that time onwards it has become one of the Islands most popular venues.

**Rob Marshall**

# THORNE Sale Days

THORNES OF WINDSOR

Saturday, 6th September, 10.00am to 1.00pm

THORNES OF STOCKBRIDGE

Saturday, 27th September, 10.00am to 1.00pm



**Our normal bargains will be on offer including;  
Frame Packs, Hive Parts, Clothing and Accessories.**

Pre-orders now being taken for collection on the day.  
To pre-order call 01673 858555 or visit [www.thorne.co.uk](http://www.thorne.co.uk)

E H THORNE (Beehives) LTD  
BEEHIVE BUSINESS PARK, RAND, NR. WRAGBY, LINCOLNSHIRE, LN8 5NJ  
Tel. 01673 858555 [sales@thorne.co.uk](mailto:sales@thorne.co.uk) [www.thorne.co.uk](http://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

43 High St, Cowes, PO31 7RR

Tel 716987

[www.bee-garden.co.uk](http://www.bee-garden.co.uk)



OPENING HOURS

Mon—Sat 10am—4pm



**com pak**

Hives, suits, tools,

foundation and jars from  
major suppliers



THORNE™





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 Rd  
Keynsham  
Bristol  
BS31 1SX  
Tel: 01179 863 550  
sales@compaksouth.co.uk  
www.compaksouth.com



This July issue arrives with the schedule for the 2014 Honey Show.

Let's celebrate this vintage year for honey with a record breaking year for entries to the show.

The front cover quote is from DEFRA, which has hitherto been at odds with the Environmental Audit Committee of MPs on the ban on neonicotinoids. The appointment of Liz Truss may change this. An entertaining piece by Owen Patterson on his real views on what he calls the 'green blob' can be found at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10978678/Owen-Paterson-Im-proud-of-standing-up-to-the-green-lobby.html>

Many thanks to the 10 people who contributed to this issue of Wight Bee.

**Gillian Belben**



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*



### Things we ought to know about supermarket purchased honey

#### **Fact 1**

Imported honey accounts for over 90% of the UK market.

Over 95% of all honey imported into the UK contains American Foul Brood (AFB) spores.

Once this imported honey has been consumed the bottle should be washed out before disposal.

AFB spore can live for over 40 years.

For this reason AFB infected colonies must be destroyed by fire and the remaining hive boxes sterilized with a powerful blow lamp.

#### **Fact 2**

The largest infestation of AFB in the UK has been found near to large commercial bottling plants (for imported honey). These plants are cleaning up their act – FERA insisting all large storage drums (45 gal drums) once emptied, must be washed out and the contaminated water, as well as the crushed drums, are environmentally disposed of.

**Ian King**

## IWBKA Honey Labels– number 15

Ian King

454 g

(1 lb)



Honey should not be given to infants under 12 months of age. Produce of the UK.

I was lucky to have a very good friend who was able to design the label and produce the artwork in return for some honey. The diamond graphic is intended to represent the Isle of Wight whereas the happy smiley honeybee complete with crown is meant to be (according to Tony's strange sense of humour) indicative of yours truly. Personally, I don't see the likeness. The labels are commercially printed to give them a professional look.

I currently use both 227g/8oz and 454g/1lb jars and labels but I have found the smaller jars are more popular and the profit margin is higher. As with all things beekeeping, hindsight is a wonderful thing and today I would choose a 12oz/340g as my largest jar size.

In addition to sticking to the requirements of BBKA Leaflet L010, I also added the statement 'Unsuitable for children under 12 months of age' in accordance with the Honey Association's voluntary code of practice regarding infants. As you may be aware there was a case of a 15-week-old child whose infant botulism was linked to the consumption of honey – parents please be aware.

I use a Thornes 'Tamper Proof' labels on my closure that are bought directly from the manufacturer ([www.thorne.co.uk/labels/tamper-evident-labels](http://www.thorne.co.uk/labels/tamper-evident-labels)). In addition I have purchased a Danro labeller ([www.danroltd.co.uk](http://www.danroltd.co.uk)) that allows me to add a unique Lot Number and Best Before Date.