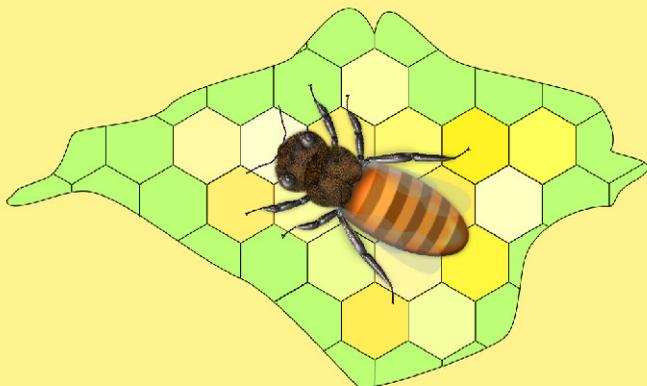


The
Wight Bee



October 2012

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Issue 103

The National Honey Show—We regret to learn that the show for this year has had to be cancelled, owing to the extremely bad season for producers and the appliance trade. There is some hope that a beekeepers' luncheon may be arranged, and we will announce it next month if plans mature.

Taken from Bee Craft, September 1954

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

This has turned out to be the ‘Keep calm and stay cheerful’ issue, which after such a depressing beekeeping year can only be achieved by delving into the past. So there is something to make you smile from over 200 years ago, and something else from over 100 years ago. Slightly more recently I found this from the editorial notes of Bee Craft, a month before I was born:

“Now Let’s Cheer Up—Yes, we have had a bad season.....so now let’s hold on for a few more months in the hope that we shall again have those piles of filled supers to deal with. The pity of it is that after a poor year so many neglect to feed their bees, and then have none in a decent condition to handle a good crop when it is secreted by the flowers.”

That editor definitely sounds as if he isn’t following his own advice.

In the absence of a good harvest, some of us turned our hands to bee-related crafts. The photograph below is of the award-winning arrangement of wax flowers by Jinnie Bartlett. Read about her and Lesley Radcliffe’s experiences of entering craft and cookery classes.



Thank you to the eight members who contributed to making this a cheerful issue.

Gillian Belben

Forefathers

Here they went with smock and crook,
Toiled in the sun, lolled in the shade,
Here they mudded out the brook
And here their hatchet cleared the glade:
Harvest-supper woke their wit,
Huntsmen's moon their wooings lit.

From this church they led their brides,
From this church themselves were led
Shoulder-high; on these waysides
Sat to take their beer and bread.
Names are gone - what men they were
These their cottages declare.

Names are vanished, save the few
In the old brown Bible scrawled;
These were men of pith and thew,
Whom the city never called;
Scarce could read or hold a quill,
Built the barn, the forge, the mill.

On the green they watched their sons
Playing till too dark to see,
As their fathers watched them once,
As my father once watched me;
While the bat and beetle flew
On the warm air webbed with dew.

Unrecorded, unrenowned,
Men from whom my ways begin,
Here I know you by your ground
But I know you not within -
There is silence, there survives
Not a moment of your lives.

Like the bee that now is blown
Honey-heavy on my hand,
From his toppling tansy-throne
In the green tempestuous land -
I'm in clover now, nor know
Who made honey long ago.

Edmund Blunden
1896—1974

From 'The Diary of a Farmer's Wife'

Then John cums in to say we must take the honey from the bees so he to the making of sulferpapers, which he do put near the fire. It flaring up, did burn his fingers: thereby did he drop all on my clene harthe stone, and did dance about like a bee in a bottel. I was verrie wroth at my harthe bein all messie, and did say it did serve him right for being such a great sillie. Wereon he did say it be all our folte and to be plagued with a passel of women be enough to try any man.

I did put some butter on his finger to stop the smarten thereon, but he did make a mighty fuss. Sarah did scrape up the sulfer from the harthestone and clene it, but it stained and do smell verrie nastie; and I did tell John not to do it in my clene kitchen agen but in the washe hous, and did take all ther, bein crosse at the waste of good sulfer. Later Carters wiffe did cum and make a goodlie pile of the papers, and so we now all reddie to take the honey on to morrow.

Sept.ye 30 - We did have a bussie time takeing the honey from the bees yester night. Me and Sarah and Carters wiffe did have to do it all; John saying his fingers bein verrie sorre from the burnes. Sarah did dig a big hole in the ground for each skeppe, where in we put a sulferpaper which we did set alight, and put the skeppes of bees on the topp. The smell of the sulfer do kill the bees, and so we do get the honey therfrom. It do grief me to kill the poor things, bein such a waste of good bees, to lie in a great heep at the bottom of the hole when the skeppe be tooke of it; but we do want the honey, useing a gret lot in the hous for divers things.

Carters wiffe did fall backards and sat in a skeppe of bees, which did make a grett bussing and did send heryouping out of the garden; at which Sarah did laff so hartilie, to see Carters wiffe holdeing up her gown while jumping over the cabbiges, that she neerlie do the same thinge. At which I quite helpless to reprove her, laffing myeself at Carters wiffes spindlie, shankie legs a bobbin up and down among the vegetables. She back anon, with a mighty big nose where a bee had sat up on it, and we to the out hous with the honey skeppes there to leave them till sure all the bees gone. Then we shall brake the honey comb up and hit it all upp; and hang it up in a clene cotton bag to run it through; then we shall strain it divers times, and when clereput into the potts reddieto use. Then we shall make honey wine with the comb waxe; to 3 skeppes of wax we do put 2

big messures of water and boil all well till the wax do swim on the top. This we do skim off and set aside; then we do put the liquor in a vat and while hot do put in it 6 lemons cut in pieces, 6 oringes, like wise 3 pieces of cinamon; then cover all with a clene cloth, and leave 3 days; then we do stur harde for 10 minets by the clock, and leave 3 days; and so on, till 12 days be past. Then strain verrie care-fully in to the cask and to each large messure put 1 quart of best brandie and 3 dried clover blossoms and 1 egg shell broke in fine powder. Leave the bung out of the cask till the clover blows do work out on top of the cask, then bung down verrie tight, and keep a-while before tappeing. The wax we do boil many times till it be a nice yeller culler and no bits of black in it, when it can be stored to use for the pollishing and harness clening.

I can rite no more in my book today; John bein in the hous, I fere he may see me.

Written by Anne Hughes 1796—1797 Edited and restored by Jeanne Preston



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Report on the Annual Honey Show 27th October 2012

After a very slow start much to my relief the entries finally started rolling in. I had feared the worst because of the challenging beekeeping year that most of us had encountered. I should have known that beekeepers are made of sterner stuff and that they would rally round. Although entries were down it was still very respectable and the standard of the entries high.

It was good to see quite a few new names entering and also winning places. I know it can seem very daunting the first time of entering the show but it really is fun and a very enjoyable day so I would urge everyone to have a go next year.

A very big thank you and well done to everyone that took part and especially to all those that helped as without you all, there would not be a show.

I think you would all agree it was another successful show and very much enjoyed by all who attended.

Looking forward to seeing you all at next year's show,

Gill Ballard

Reflections from a new entrant

I regard myself as a keeper of bees, a beginner, having kept 2-3 hives for the past 3 full years following a beginners course with Terry. This was my first time entering the Show, although I have visited the Show several times before. Somehow there never seemed to be enough time to prepare for it with all of my other commitments but, as this year was such an awful year for bees, I found myself with a little time because I had no honey extraction to do. I had made some Beeswax Polish and candles before, following one of Terry's famous demonstrations. I had also made some soap for the first time a couple of months before the Show and was keen to make another batch, and it really just blossomed from there. I got some beeswax cosmetic recipes from the internet and found that it was just like making a combination of sauces and preserves – some stirring, and keeping everything warm when transferring the mixture to different containers. Once I had started, I wanted to try most of the recipes and ended up with 10 different hive products! Mostly cosmetics but also the traditional polish, emulsion and a moulded ounce of beeswax. I only had about 8 ozs of wax from my hives and it was a real challenge getting six perfect one-ounce blocks – in the end I called a halt after re-melting 4 times and ended up with an air-bubble in one of the blocks. Making the Elizabethan Honey Cake was interesting as I had not baked with honey before and knew to watch out for it burning. My fingers ached by the time I had hand-grated 8ozs of parsnip, so I

was determined to sample the cake afterwards and, despite it being heavier than a traditional sponge, it really was quite tasty, and I particularly enjoyed the combination of lemon icing and stem ginger on top.

I am a compulsive knitter and decided to make some booties and combine them with Christmas tree beeswax candles and attempt to sell them as presents to give to people expecting new babies, along with some candles and polish. Only then did I discover from Terry that beeswax polish has to carry a warning label when selling to the public, so I rushed home to make some!

I must say I was a little daunted as there are some members who have been entering honey shows for tens of years, but everyone was very helpful and friendly and I even managed some 2nds and a 3rd. I will definitely start earlier and enter again next year and, who knows, the bees might spare me some honey for showing if the weather is kinder in 2013.

Lesley Radcliffe

Wax Flowers at the National

Writing this piece might seem a bit like bragging, but is not meant that way. Last year was my first visit to the National Honey Show at Weybridge, where I first saw that flowers could be made from beeswax. I was inspired to try my hand at this, converting my newly acquired skills in sugar to the magical medium from the bees. Before last Christmas I had decided on an arrangement design and flower content that I was to work on throughout the year. The idea was that the one display could be presented at both the National and the IWBKA Honey shows. Unfortunately both were to be on the same weekend, so in June I started a second arrangement for the 'home' show. Both had to be completed and transported to the shows. The National display had to go to France with me for two months and on return straight to the show. Never having any experience of entering such a show I was in a state of nerves and setting up on Wednesday afternoon was done with very shaky hands. On Thursday afternoon I took my mother aged 92 to see the show and discover how the flowers were received by the judges. I was staggered to find that I had been awarded First Prize. My love of flowers and joy of trying to create them out of both sugar and wax led me to attempt this – so if you have a passion about your own and your bees' work then enter these shows and share it with others.

Jinnie Bartlett

Island beekeeper interview—Klaus Landahl



Klaus first became interested in beekeeping after watching a friend who had bees. They were pretty fierce bees too, Klaus remembers that you couldn't get near them – rather like some Island bees, he suggests! When he first wanted his own apiary around ten years ago he was lucky to be offered a couple of colonies from a colleague and was on his way. His first bees were wild bred German Carniolans, but Klaus soon changed to Buckfasts and has stayed with them ever since. He still sources pedigree queens from Germany, and breeds his own queens each year from them, replacing those in his colonies annually to maintain optimum performance. This is on the basis that he encourages fast build-up in the Spring, getting the equivalent of perhaps three year's work from a queen in one year; keeping them longer can lead to swarminess and other problems that he prefers to pre-empt. He styles his beekeeping methodology very much upon Brother Adam, and finds it works for him.

Honey production is his main aim, and even this year his bees have been very productive, the limiting factor having been the number of surviving colonies. Similarly he won't count his colonies now, knowing that the critical number will be those surviving into the Spring. Klaus's wife Kathrin helps with the considerable work involved in honey processing and wax moulding. Given the chance the children enjoy the fun of making their own candles.

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Family take up much of Klaus and Kathrins' time and interest; they have five children, three of whom are being home schooled. It is thanks to this that we have them here on the Island. Five years ago in Germany they came up against a prohibition on home schooling, and were faced with the need to leave quickly against the threat that the children would be taken from them to be educated conventionally. Fortunately here we are a little more enlightened in relation to this, it is permitted, and many parents home-school their children successfully. A friend had been over here and on his suggestion Klaus and Kathrin came to the UK and settled on the Island. It cost Klaus his career, which had been as a specialist psycho-geriatric nurse, as qualifications are not always interchangeable even within the EU, but he seems happy enough to have let it go. If there were spare hours in the day and the opportunity Klaus would like to take up fishing again, after his previous experiences of fishing for trout in the Black Forest. The bees (and house renovations) take most of his spare time – and, of course – the vital matter of bringing up the next generation of young Wight beekeepers.

Extracts from 'Her Majesty the Queen of Hivedom Interviewed' a story in 'Little Folks', a monthly magazine for "Young People" - dated 1900

Mr Black Beetle, who edited the Insects' Chronicle, sat balancing a large gooseberry thorn in his feelers, with which he had been making notes on an ivy-leaf before him, and seemed buried in deep thought. Then he took up a bluebell that was beside him and rang it. Presently an ant reporter appeared. "Ant," he said, "I find I still have half a cabbage-leaf unfilled of our weekly edition. I think you had better make your way down to the hive and try and induce Her Majesty Queen Bee to grant you an interview; as the weather is still chilly they cannot be very busy there now." Hence it was that the following got into print.

"Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell me what you remember first?"

"Well, I don't know much about my grub life, except that I used to be fed with royal jelly especially prepared for me, and not with the brown bee-bread made for the other grubs. My cell, too, was larger and differently shaped from the common cells. At length I grew so big that the wax walls seemed to press on me until I could bear it no longer, and I cried out in a tiny piping little note. Then the Dowager Queen Mother gave orders that all who were going to remain her subjects should prepare for a four days journey."

"Don't you think it very hard on the old queen to have to give up her throne to the one newly hatched?"

"Well you see, they know more of the world than the young one does, and are better able to go out and seek their fortune"

"Do your subjects live the same time?"

"Oh no; a worker bee wears itself out in six weeks in summer time, but those that are born late in the year live through the winter, while the drones only live part of the season. We kill them off in the autumn, when food is getting scarce."

"Does not this seem very cruel?"

"Not at all. Everyone should work for his living, or be of some use in the world."

(cont. on page 12)

Landmarks and events of the Isle Of Wight—43
The Milne Memorial Tree



Professor John Milne (1850-1913) must be one of the Island's most famous residents. A mining engineer by profession, he took a job with the Imperial College of Engineering in Japan where his interest in earthquakes developed. His invention of the seismograph and strategies for reducing the devastation caused by earth tremors brought him gratitude from the Japanese and world wide recognition. He was awarded The Order of the Ring Sun by the Emperor and given a generous lifetime pension

On retirement he came to live in Shide with his Japanese wife. A presentation tree to mark his achievement was donated by the Imperial College of Japan and plans were made for this to be dedicated at a special ceremony by the Japanese Ambassador. These plans were delayed and unfortunately in the interim period the tree died. Plucking triumph from the jaws of disaster a substitute tree was identified in the grounds of the Isle of Wight College and was installed in time for the ceremony to take place.

The tree has developed into a magnificent specimen and at the time of writing (August 2012) it is covered in white blossom. It stands on the west side of Shide road close to the old Barley Mow.

John Milne's marked grave can be seen St. Paul's Churchyard and ceremonies to mark the hundredth anniversary of his death are planned for next year. A competition to design a suitable plaque as a memorial is currently taking place.

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(cont. from page 10)

“One fine morning, when they were all busy building cells and storing honey, I left the palace and went out into the sunshine. I was very handsome, they tell me, with my bright little wings and long elegant body, and, like many another young lady, I thought a good deal of myself.” “Were you not nervous at being out alone?” “I was rather, so I did not go far, but settled on a lovely blush rose bush that grew near. I had not been long there when oh, such a handsome drone settled on the same blossom and began to say all sorts of pretty things to me. And then he asked me to be his wife, and he said he would get a white butterfly to marry us if I would only consent. And just then one flew by, and I was so afraid he would not come back again, that I said ‘yes’ all of a hurry; and so we were married. Oh what a happy day we spent together; but at last I said that I should return, for a queen must not be wholly unmindful of her people. When I asked my dear consort to come with me I was shocked to see he was very ill and hardly able to answer me. I was in great distress, and a little breeze shaking the bush, he fell to the ground quite dead, and some of the rose petals covered him up. After that I had very little time to think of my grief, for I had to begin laying eggs. Thousands and thousands every day for three whole weeks.”



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"Some time after this the weather began to get cold and we had to lay in our winter store, as one day the bee-master came with a big black veil on and took away a lot of our honey. So we had to make more before the winter came. And, oh dear, now the spring is well in, I suppose I shall soon be called the old queen," she said with a sigh, "and I in my turn shall have to seek a new home ."

(Were the 'Little Folks' thinking perhaps of their own Queen Victoria? The old Queen died the following year in January 1901)

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IWBKA HONEY SHOW 27TH OCTOBER 2012

LIST OF PRIZE WINNERS

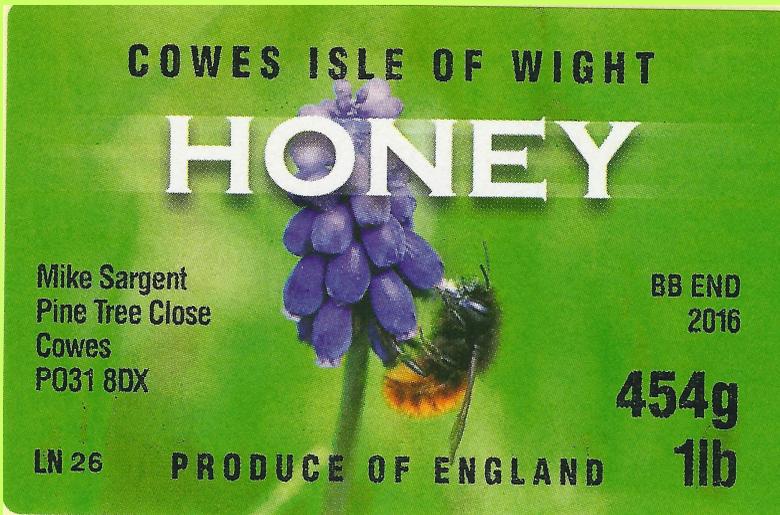
The Robert's Memorial Trophy	Mary Case
The Claude Cooper Memorial Trophy	Gill Ballard
The Virginia Ford Trophy	Gill Ballard
The Reg Gallop Trophy	Jinnie Bartlett
The Ray Fitchett Award	Gill Ballard
Rosette for Best in Show	Gill Ballard
Rosette for Novice class	Mike Sargent
Rosette for 12 jars Honey	Mike Sargent
Blue Ribbon Award	Mike Sargent
Most Popular Honey	Michael Boll

Recipes with honey **Balsamic pickled onions**

900g shallots or pickling onions, peeled
50g salt
1 large cinnamon stick
1 tbsp pickling spice
850ml malt vinegar
300 ml balsamic vinegar
3 tbsp honey

1. place the peeled onions in a bowl, add the salt and cover with water. Set aside for at least 24hours.
2. Tie the cinnamon and pickling spices in a piece of muslin, place in a non-reactive saucepan with the malt vinegar and bring to the boil. Cover leave to infuse for at least 12 hours. Add the balsamic vinegar and honey.
3. Drain the onions and pack into sterilised jars. Pour over enough vinegar mixture to cover the onions.
4. Store in a cool, dark place for at least 2 weeks before using.

IWBKA Honey Labels
Number 8—Mike Sargent



My first honey crop. My first attempt at extraction filtering and bottling. With the highest possible co-operation from my wife Trixie we completed the process without too many problems. Much was learned and next year we will be better organised!

I took into account the information required on the label and started work on my computer. Life being what it is slipped a spanner into the works when my computer retired and had to be replaced. The magazines and product brochures had many ready—made labels on offer so, being impatient I chose the commercial label route.

The company I chose had an additional sticker explaining granulation. I thought this was a useful addition so I chose one of their designs for my 2012 somewhat limited crop.

I'm told by those who know about these things that 2013 will be a bumper year so I will take full advantage of my new computer to do my own thing in the label department, making sure I tick all the boxes.