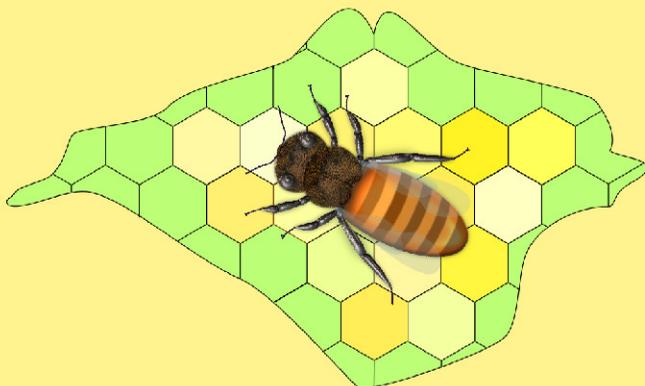


The
Wight Bee



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Issue 111

'Ivy, which, if left to grow of its own sweet will on walls and trees, blooms profusely in October, is eagerly sought after on sunny days. The honey it yields is very inferior, but it makes a useful addition to winter stores in the hives.'

The Practical Bee Guide by J.G. Digges, first published 1904

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

There are a couple of references to bees on ivy in this issue, which will be my abiding thought for October 2014. Right up to Halloween bees were taking full advantage of the record temperatures to extract the last vestiges of pollen and nectar from the abundance of ivy in my garden, ivy I am now pleased I resisted the removal of from banks and trees. Even Shelley seems to have noticed their importance in the autumn months—see the extract below. In place of the beekeeper interview this issue has an interesting ‘pull out and keep’ leaflet on Pollen Grains. It was suggested by Microscopy correspondent Ian King and was produced by Norman Chapman of the Quekett Microscopical Club. Norman has given his permission for it to be reproduced. The artwork of the drawings, in amazing detail, are all his own.

Gillian Belben

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aerial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

From 'Prometheus Unbound'

P.B. Shelley

IWBKA Apiary Visit Report
Hosted by Dave Cassell at Whitefield Farm Ashey 10th Aug 2014

Our Chairman Terry Willis welcomed us and our host Dave Cassell gave us a brief history of his bees on this site. Following one good year he has had two bad years including this one, although one hive had improved during the previous four weeks

Out of the eight hives on this site he had not had a swarm this year and said that there had not been any flying bees during June in spite of there being oil seed rape in flower in fields nearby.

Comparing here with another of his sites at Newport where he had taken 1200 lbs of honey from 23 hives he had only taken 30lbs from one hive on this site. Nearby colonies in Brading were very productive and would have been feeding off the same crops from the same farm.

As Dave proceeded to inspect the hives he told us that all the colonies had lost their queens at some stage and that new queens had not improved them. Also the bees did not seem very ambitious.

One hive had had four replacement queens and all had disappeared after initially laying. This hive was amalgamated with another weak hive that was queen right. It was good for those of us who had not seen this done before to observe this procedure first hand.

There were various thoughts given by members as to the possible cause of the problems Dave was experiencing on this site, one being that it was cold and low-lying by ponds of water. It was suggested that the hives be moved to another part of the site away from the water, as he did not want to give up keeping bees there.

Following the inspection of Dave's hives we then inspected (much to him denying any personal responsibility), a pink painted hive being managed by Jane. A full super of honey was taken off by removing one frame at a time, shaking and brushing the bees off with a feather, placing the frame in an empty super and covering it up immediately after each frame.

This concluded a very interesting time, enjoyed by 23 members and two children who were taking a great interest in the bees. We then had a relaxing time in the sun enjoying tea and cakes made and served by some of the ladies. On behalf of all Terry expressed thanks to our host and all who helped make this afternoon both an enjoyable and informative time.

Keith Joyce

Wax Moth Nightmare



In the spring a friend put an empty brood box in my shed. It had been the top half of a double brood hive and it had old comb and some uncapped honey. It might come in useful for a stray swarm so it was left with a crown board top and bottom till needed. Three weeks ago I added an extracted super to the stack, again with a board top and

bottom. Recently I thought there was a strange smell in the shed and looked in to the super. What met my eyes was frightening as the box was crawling with hundreds of wax moth grubs.

Not all of the frames were ruined so I took the box outside and proceeded to shake as many of the grubs as possible into a bucket of water. It took about ten minutes of shaking and hand picking to complete the job when there were at least **five hundred** grubs in the bucket.

Turning my attention to the brood box, not a shred of wax was left. The grubs I had killed were obviously looking for pastures new in my prime super. All of the brood frames were covered in black webbing and were swiftly deposited in a bonfire but the job was not over.

The board on which the brood box had been standing hid dozens of white crawlers and when it was taken away they proceeded to climb up the walls and windows. Chasing these took me some time.

In all there must have been over a thousand grubs killed. I think that none have survived but will keep a close watch lest any eggs survived to produce another generation.

Rob Marshall

Recipes with honey

Pears poached in mead

375 ml mead

30 g honey

30 g caster sugar

6 pears, peeled, the stalks left on

2 bay leaves

Heat mead, honey and sugar in a large shallow pan with a lid until honey and sugar have dissolved.

Put pears and bay leaves in the pan.

Cover, then turn up the heat till the liquid begins to boil.

Turn down the heat to simmer and keep the pan covered.

Turn the pears over every ten minutes until they are tender.

Remove the pears. Boil remaining liquid for five minutes or so until the reduced and slightly syrupy. Pour over the pears and serve.

Report on October 11th meeting at Arreton

Skep beekeeping—'there are no cold corners in a skep'

It takes a particularly entertaining and fascinating speaker to keep an audience engaged and interested for well over an hour, but this is what Chris Parks was able to do: explaining the history of skep use, pulling in references to Bronze Age, Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon cultures, explaining how the very words we use today have their roots in Anglo-Saxon or Latin. Skeys are breathable as well as insulating. Their use today can be modernised with for example mesh floors, and the combination of 'super' and 'brood' skeys. Skeys have survived today because of their efficacy as swarm collectors, but Chris showed how they have been and could be so much more. Amongst many eye-opening facts, he exploded the myth that harvesting honey from skeys required the killing of bees with some kind of sulphurous smoke—not so!

Continued on page 7

A hive I remember

The phone rang one Sunday evening just as I was about to retire for the night. A damsel in distress was on the phone.

"Please what can I do. I am in a real fix! We are moving house tomorrow and I am expecting the furniture removers early in the day. I've got bees everywhere. The kitchen is full of them. The beehive I keep hasn't been opened for a long time and as I want the furniture men to move it I thought I would look inside today. The bees were very bad tempered. I wanted to take off the honey but I didn't manage it. After I had got a few frames indoors the bees were coming after me so I shut the hive down quickly and the bits didn't fit very well. I thought the bees would go home when it got dark but every time I switch on the light they start flying again. The new owners are due to move in tomorrow afternoon. I'm only moving to a house about a quarter of a mile away but I think there may be trouble. Please help! ! What can I do?"

I formed a picture of the "bits not fitting well". All kinds of uncharitable thoughts went through my mind at this late hour of the week-end. For a start I had to go to work in Ventnor the next day and the problem was in Ryde. However I gave Corporal Jones' wise advice, "DON'T PANIC", and said I would be on site at first light (it was mid June), and rang off. I knew it was a WBC hive. I knew that I could bring it back to a home site for a holiday. I knew that I had a big bee-proof bag I could put it in. What I didn't know was how much it weighed! I got there at about 6 am. There were a few bees flying but I sealed the entrance with a foam rubber plug and various other apertures with plasticene. A fair sprinkling of exhausted workers were still crawling around the kitchen. These I thought would have to be sacrificed.

Two stages were necessary to solve our problem. We had to get the bag over the hive and secure it below to make it bee-tight. We then had to get it on to my trailer. Both operations were somewhat hampered by the fact that there were three full supers on the hive which was on a double brood box. I could hardly budge my side at the first attempt but was shamed by my shapely damsel in distress who lifted her side with no effort. (She told me later that she had worked on the land).

Despite her affirmation that "It isn't too heavy ",I thought a hernia was imminent and backed the trailer into the garden to make the task a little easier.

By seven o'clock I was en route for Rookley having given heartless Instructions about the bees left in the kitchen. Back at home the thought then struck me that I couldn't possibly unload the consignment alone. Fortunately my colleague David was able to turn out and between us we staggered a short way from the road and put the hive down in my "*Rookley Park Site Apiary*"

The time is now 8.15 and everyone is going to work. We manhandle the massive white parcel into the site and gingerly unwrap the package. Instantaneously the air becomes heavy with outraged bees. It is a big stock and about 90% of the inhabitants now take to the air looking for vengeance. A cyclist passing slowly by picks up a comet like tail. Each travelling car has an attendant parcel of winged inspectors looking for a way in. I am most apprehensive.

Sometimes God is very kind to us. At the moment when I really am scared about the outcome of all this, and having nightmarish visions of killer bees terrorising Rookley, it starts to pour with rain. The bees know when they are beaten and rush home en masse.

I was back indoors for a rapid breakfast by half past eight and at work in school by nine. Later in the day when I looked at them again the bees had settled down but I didn't look inside. I plucked up courage to make a full inspection after a week or so and I wasn't really surprised at what I found.

Rob Marshall

Continued from page 5

Mead making the Melvyn Asplett way

A huge amount of detailed information on this subject was passed over to the audience, many of whom had already sampled some of Melvyn's mead. This may have affected this reporter's ability to record his talk, all I can remember is that it's illegal to make fortified wines, defined as 21% alcohol and above, and if you use turbo-charged yeast, you can get a mead at 23% alcohol—don't do this.

Many thanks to Chris McClellan and the Committee for organising this packed programme.

Landmarks and events of the Isle Of Wight—51

The donkey at the well



One of the most famous artefacts on the Island is the wheel at Carisbrooke Castle where thousands of visitors have seen how the great depth of the well has necessitated the use of donkey power to bring the water to the surface.

An image of this process has frequently been used in connection with Isle of Wight activities and it became the trademark of the soft drinks company Gould, Hibberd and Randall, makers of the popular “Kixie” lemonade.

It was not difficult to choose a local craftsman to produce a suitable image to be used at the company headquarters. The entrance to Harry Pritchett’s brickworks at Rookley was stacked with examples of his skill in producing earthenware figures and Pritchetts were entrusted to produce this special piece. In due course a suitable image was created and delivered to the Church Litten site to be mounted high on the wall.

For many years residents could see this plaque but when Marks and Spencers arrived the wall was demolished. Happily the value of the artwork was recognised. With considerable care the plaque was delicately repositioned and it now looks proudly down on Church Litten

Rob Marshall

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Waxmoth continued

In case anyone is still struggling with wax moth, either prevention or cure, BBKA have a very useful leaflet on descriptions and treatment, downloadable from:

[http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/wax_moth_l020_\(data\)_r2_1342860174.pdf](http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/wax_moth_l020_(data)_r2_1342860174.pdf)

The guidance that caught my eye was the method of freezing equipment for 24 hours at at least -18°C . I read this after I had utilized an old ice cream chest freezer packed with boxes and frames, kept it on for 24 hours and then unpacked.

I shook out a few larvae, that looked pretty dead, and then watched as one of them started to move and attempt to wriggle off the table. The moral of this story is that either Nestles freezers don't reach -18°C or my wax moth larvae have been getting Houdini-like Arctic training.

IWBKA Honey Labels– number 16

Mike Skipper



This is not an official label. I put on my honey jars when I give it to members of my family and friends.

It was designed by my daughter Joanna and given to me as a birthday present when I started beekeeping four years ago. The idea for the label has been taken from the Paul Newman sauces that used to be on sale and which showed a picture of him on the label.

I have been interested in beekeeping since my days at primary school where our sports teacher used to tell stories of his beekeeping. My opportunity came after a chance conversation during a game of squash with a friend of mine, Don Ruth. His daughter Kay had taken up beekeeping the previous year and was a member of the IWBKA. Kay gave me my first hive of bees and for the first two years we maintained our hives and extracted the honey together. As Kay has now left the Island my wife now helps me extract the honey.