

The Isle of Wight  
Beekeepers Association  
A SHORT HISTORY



Centenary  
Edition

# Our Founding Fathers

In October 1918 the national food situation was desperate. Although the Armistice would be declared in less than three weeks, few could have made this prediction. The Food Production Department for the Island must have judged that the time was ripe to encourage Island Beekeepers to support the National Effort. An advert had been placed in the local press and anyone who had an interest in beekeeping was urged to attend a meeting in Newport.

The gathering was arranged at the Guildhall. There were twenty two present when the meeting began. Mr. B.M. Douglas, who was listed as the Secretary of the Horticultural sub-committee (probably a part of the Food Production Department) opened the meeting by explaining that it was hoped that an Island Beekeeping Association could be formed that afternoon. A local beekeeper, Mr. G.F. Quinton was asked to take the chair and the meeting began.

One of those present was from Hampshire. This was Mr. D.J. Hills who was secretary of an existing organization covering both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. One must assume that it did not wish to lose what little influence it had over here for the first motion proposed that an Isle of Wight Association, when formed, should be affiliated immediately with the Hampshire Association. This motion got no backing. the motion that did find favour was more cautious in nature. It proposed:-

*"That a separate association be formed for the Isle of Wight and that the question of affiliation be considered when the association has been formed."*

Apart from appointing Mr. G.F. O'Fflahertie as Honorary Secretary and Mr. G.F. Quinton as Chairman, plus a committee of thirteen, no other ground was covered that day.

The new Association did not let the grass grow under its feet. Exactly a week later the first committee meeting was held. First business was the question of affiliation. Caution was to be the watchword. The Secretary was instructed to write to the Hants and IW. Association asking for 'terms'! Next the name was agreed. It was to be 'The Isle of Wight Beekeepers Association'.

With a view no doubt, to put the Association on a sound financial footing an impressive list of island gentry was compiled. All were to be asked to become Vice-presidents. The list began:- Lady Baring, Lady Hosie, Lady Thornycroft, Lord

## Cover Photograph

Taken during a summer meeting it shows two of our members trying to locate the queen during a re-queening exercise

Tennyson, the Hon. Mrs. J. Seely, Sir E. Chatwin-Clarke and Mrs. Moulton-Barrett. The list then ventured further down the social scale to include the M.P. and officers from the armed services.

A pointer to the social divisions of the day can be seen in the subscription rates which were fixed at this meeting:- Cottagers - one shilling, Farmers, Tradesman etc. two shillings and sixpence, others - five shillings or more.

By the January of the following year, 1919, the newly formed Association was really in business. It began co-operative trading.

Ordered from E.H. Taylor at this time were:-

1500 frames,  
2000 sections,  
2 hundredweight of foundation,  
one dozen queen excluders  
and six smokers.

In addition, Wheeler Bros. of Ryde were asked to provide three WBC hives and three single wall hives and to give a quotation for the supply of a dozen of each pattern. Paid up members of the Association were to be sold equipment at 5% off list price. The minutes do not record how the initial stock was to be paid for.

To put this great act of faith in context it should be remembered that by 1918 'Isle of Wight Disease' had wiped out more than 80% of the bees on the Island and a similar proportion nationwide. Cause and cure had yet to be discovered.

Dealing in appliances at this time might well have brought financial disaster.

*Continued overleaf*



*When the Association was formed traditional skep beekeeping was still carried out in some places. Honey was collected by killing off the bees each autumn. The picture shows an alternative. Bees were "driven" from their combs into an empty skep by drumming the sides with the flat of the hand.*



The first AGM of the IWBKA was held in Newport Guildhall in March 1920. Lady Seely presided at the meeting having been asked previously to fix a date convenient for her. Eighteen members were present out of a membership of sixty one.

Most of the time the meeting was given to debating a scheme to help those who had lost stocks through acarine disease. Considerable heat was generated when it was disclosed that the Ministry of Agriculture was proposing to import large numbers of Italian Bees in a re-stocking programme. This was more than Men of Wight could stand and missives were to be sent both to BBKA and to the Ministry deploring this attempt to contaminate British Stock.

The Hants and Isle of Wight Association must have offered satisfactory terms for the Secretary reported that, following negotiations, the Committee was to recommend that affiliation should proceed. This marriage of convenience took place in due course but would remain under strain for many years to come until the amicable divorce ensued.



*Harry Cooper's Thorley apiary*

This booklet was compiled by Rob Marshall and members of the Committee using the services of the County Record Office to access the archives of the IWBKA that are stored there.

## Our Early Years

Two years after the Association was formed the Committee was looking for further development. To raise public awareness a demonstration was suggested at the Annual Agricultural Show at the Nine Acres field. This site, just off Trafalgar Road in Newport, is now covered with houses. It is not clear from the minutes whether the display entailed live bees but the finances of the venture were recorded. Expenditure exceeded income by £7.10s.9d.

The Agricultural Committee must have been pleased with the display for it agreed to cover this loss.

The trading side of the Association was going through a bad patch. Reading between the lines one can gather that there were some members who had been tardy in settlement. The Committee resolved "That any member who has appliances from IWBKA shall pay for them at the time or within one week".

## Our Own Label

Early in the Association's life, its chairman, Phillip Smallwood, arranged for a label to be produced specifically for members. Its unusual shape made it expensive to produce so it never caught on but a rectangular version became very popular.





## Two Giants of the Early Days

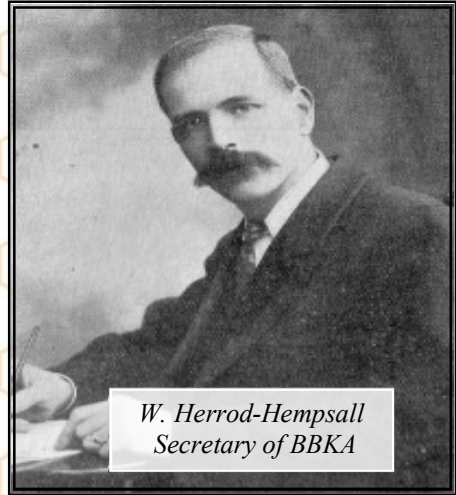
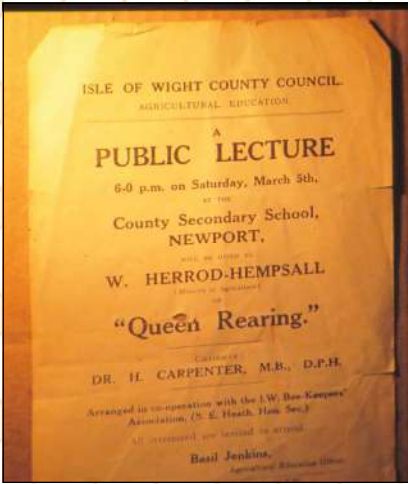
**Harry Cooper** was a farmer's son born in the late eighties. He had no formal schooling as his father thought he should stay and work on the farm. But what he learned at his mother's knee served young Harry well. He began keeping bees as a means of generating a little private capital. In his youth he was a Sunday School teacher where his talent for community spirit developed. He soon became the Area Secretary of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Beekeepers and witnessed the birth of the separate Island Association. Soon after he became the Secretary he brought to the notice of the authorities the strange affliction that had killed off most of the bees over here and the story of the Isle of Wight Disease began.

**Douglas Roberts** came to live on the Island shortly after the 1914-1918 war. Partially paralysed by a serious head wound he hoped to make a living from beekeeping about which he was a novice. With Carrie, his young wife, he began a partnership with a local beekeeper but it did not work and he continued alone despite his disability. He never regained use of his right hand and always wrote left handed. A gentle man with plenty of drive, he soon became the Treasurer of the newly formed IWBKA, an office he held for about fifty years.

His beekeeping business prospered. He specialised in producing pedigree queen bees and at one time raised hundreds of these every year. His reputation was world wide and Roberts Queens were sent from the Island to all quarters of the globe.



# A Distinguished Visitor



**Mr. W.M. Herrod-Hempsall** figures quite prominently in the early days of the Island Association. Besides being the Secretary of BBKA he was nominated as an "Expert" by the Ministry of Agriculture and toured the country promoting the craft of Beekeeping. He was a man with a determination to resist any foreign influence over here. On a visit to Doug Roberts he pointed to the Langstroth hives and spoke in derogatory terms of them "Yankee, Yankee" he said. On another occasion he recommended that our beekeepers use only British matches to light their smokers !

He came to the Island on several occasions. On one of these he addressed a group at the Island Agricultural Show but at the IWBKA Committee meeting afterwards it was agreed that he had not drawn vast crowds to his talk.

A poster printed at the time shows that he did visit the Island at the expense of the County Council. In those days Beekeeping education was subsidised by our rates.

The handbook of the I.W. Education Committee issued in 1936 contains the following paragraph:

## AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

### Beekeeping

Instruction in this subject is arranged by the Isle of Wight Beekeepers Association, through their honorary secretary Mr. E. J. Bedford and the Agricultural Education Officer Mr. Basil Jenkins B.Sc.

# Honey Show Changes

Early chapters of our Association history show that among the membership were men of drive and vision. On the Committee at this time were Harry Cooper (of Isle of Wight Disease fame) and the young but disabled Doug Roberts. Both were on the Schedule Committee which prepared for the inaugural show which took place in July 1922.

Cash prizes seem very generous by today's standards.

## Prize List

Class	Prizes	
For the best six 1lb sections	7/6	5/-
For the best 1 In section	5/-	2/6
For the best six bottles of 1922 honey	7/6	5/-
For the bees 1lb bottle of honey (any year)	5/-	2/6
For the best six bottles of granulated honey (any year)	7/6	5/-
For the best shallow frame	5/-	2/6
For the best standard frame	5/-	2/6
For the best 1lb exhibit of wax	5/-	2/6
For any article of food or medicine in which honey is an ingredient	5/-	2/6
For the best and most complete Frame Hive with shallow frame box or section rack	10/-	7/6

## A Visiting Expert

In our early shows Doug Roberts was the judge at our annual show but more recently we have asked David Sandwell, a National Honey show judge to officiate.

He has regularly congratulated our exhibitors on the high standards of their entries both in the honey and the beeswax classes





# The Demonstration Tent

Sometime in the late fifties the Association embarked on a new venture to educate the general public about the joys of beekeeping. For this purpose a demonstration tent was purchased for use at the Annual Agricultural show. Initially this was the preserve of Sam Heath, the Secretary, but soon it became the task of Arthur Johnson who supervised its use for many years.

The tent was made of green mesh. It was a square about eight feet high but had no roof so the bees were lifted above the spectators but could easily have attacked them if aroused. The trick was to deplete a stock of most of the flying bees before placing them in the tent so the demonstrator was guaranteed a docile stock with which to work. Of course this entailed a good deal of time and effort from the organiser but Arthur seemed to like the task.

In time the tent became worn and concern grew about the safety of spectators so use of the tent was discontinued in the seventies. With today's litigation problems we would not dare stage this kind of demonstration now.



Here we see Arthur and Mrs Heath with honey for sale outside the demonstration tent.



Chillerton  
Circa 1960

As the photographs show, our members nowadays are much more sensitive to the need for good, protective clothing.

Godshill  
Circa 2010





# The Honey Show Trophies

These have been awarded to reflect the contribution made to the association. They are as follow:-

## **THE DOUGLAS ROBERTS MEMORIAL TROPHY.**

As founder member of the association, Doug's contributions are mentioned elsewhere in this book. His talents in the craft were legendary. He was known internationally as a breeder of pedigree queens.

## **THE REG GALLOP HANDICRAFT TROPHY**

Reg was a personable craftsman with a gift for using reconditioned material garnered from wayside skips. He got a great deal of pleasure in recounting his latest constructions and many members gathered much from his tips.

## **THE RAY FITCHETT TROPHY**

Ray was Show Day Secretary at a time when changes in our show arrangement were in need of overhaul. He shouldered this task with diplomacy and good humour. His numerous contributions to *Wight Bee* were eagerly awaited by readers.

## **THE VIRGINIA FORD TROPHY**

Virginia was not a beekeeper Her husband was a great friend of our honey show. He was a top judge of wine and officiated free of charge judging the mead classes. for many years. His wife was a talented needlewoman who was allowed to display her work and she presented the trophy.





# Our Teaching Apiary

For many years members of the IWBKA had yearned for somewhere to set up a teaching apiary. By sheer coincidence in the winter of 2010-2011 we were approached by the Bee Master at Quarr Abbey seeking help to look after their hives.



Following a meeting at Quarr an inspection of their 10 hives was carried out when it was discovered that without immediate intervention they were likely to lose all their colonies. In the urgent interests of rescuing their bees we undertook to take over the management of their apiary on the understanding that we might set up a teaching apiary there. With ample car parking, toilet facilities and a new tea room being built (not to mention their comprehensive Public Liability insurance) this was going to be a perfect place for a Teaching Apiary. Clearly such an ambitious project was going to cost thousands – where was the money coming from? Our first thought was to approach the National Lottery which was ploughing millions into community projects just like this - fortunately we ticked all the boxes (volunteer led, education, conservation, community involvement, not for profit, to name just a few of the requirements). Thanks to their generous set-up grant via the Awards For All scheme, the Teaching Apiary dream looked likely to become a reality. Fortunately our project fitted nicely into Quarr Abbey plans to diversify – a joint venture was born. All honey produced at the Teaching Apiary would be sold through the new tearoom.

Early in 2011 the Teaching Apiary team took charge of the Abbey's Langstroth hives and added Nationals and a WBC of their own. During that spring, up to fifteen new beekeepers at a time, were taught theory and practical beekeeping skills on a weekly basis by Liz Vanwyk whilst a group of volunteers cheerfully undertook the mammoth task of cleaning up Quarr Abbey equipment which hadn't been used for some time, while other work parties trimmed and planted hedges, strimmed grass, removed saplings, re-aligned fences and generally created an airy and workable site. Some members contributed hives and after close inspection these were added to the site



*Dave and Martin carry a donated hive on to the site*

At the end of the season, honey was processed and sold through the Abbey tearoom. The first year had proved to be a steep learning curve but very satisfying experience for all involved.

From the start it was our ambition to become self-sufficient with our beekeeping and breeding. Certified colonies bought in from the mainland are very expensive. Beekeepers looking for the cheapest colony, led, in a previous year, to diseased bees being brought onto the Island. This resulted in all the affected hives, which were occupied by thousands of bees, being cremated so breeding more bees that are certified as disease free, *on* the Island should ensure the long-term viability of the local bee population.

We shall always be indebted to the BIG Lottery and the Awards For All programme that has funded our set-up equipment, and to the IW AONB Sustainable Development Fund who provided us with a grant to launch our Rearing Island Bees project.

In this centenary year the TA is embarking on its eighth year. The Teaching Apiary Team meets once a week at Quarr Abbey where beekeeping volunteers are always welcome.



# A Busy Year

## 1987 PROGRAMME

**SATURDAY 17th JAN 3.00p.m. at ACC**  
Annual General Meeting

**FRIDAYS 13th FEB to 6th MARCH Incl.**  
Course for Beginners IWCAT 7.00p.m. Start

**SATURDAY 21st FEB at 7.30p.m at ACC**  
Talk & Slide Show by Arthur Johnson

**SATURDAY 14th MARCH**  
**ANNUAL DINNER**

**FRIDAY 27th MARCH**  
Talk. 'The Records & Minute Book of the  
IWBKA' By Rob Marshall

**SATURDAY 18th APRIL at 2.30p.m.**  
'Spring Cleaning for Real Beginners'  
in Eve & Harry Carter's Meadow  
'Marymead', Woodside, Wootton Bridge  
Tel: 883208 (Travel instructions to follow!)

**SATURDAY 16th MAY at 2.30p.m.**  
Beginners' Meeting - Val Gwynn's Apiary  
'Beams', Barton's Comer, Shalflleet.  
Tel: 878249 Grid Ref: 416892  
Led by Harry Carter.

**WEDNESDAY 27th MAY at 6.30p.m.**

- \* An Oil Seed Rape Foray,  
led by Dave Belben and Rob Marshall.  
Details of venue to follow later.

**SATURDAY 7th JUNE at 3.00p.m.**  
Dorothy & Jim Harding's Apiary at  
'Oak Lodge', Cranmore Ave., Nr. Yarmouth.  
Tel: 760309 Grid Ref: 391907

**SATURDAY 20th JUNE**  
Beginners' Meeting  
at Anne & Michael Claridge's Apiary  
14, Arundel Road, Ryde.  
Tel: 65812 Grid Ref: 602916

**SATURDAY 27th JUNE at 6.30p.m.**  
Coffee Evening with raffle / sales table in  
Aid of Wight Bee at Mary & Cliff Pain's  
'Rock Cottage', Sandy Lane, Blackwater,  
Newport. Tel: 524597 Grid Ref: 506865

**SATURDAY 4th JULY at 2.30p.m.**  
Stephen & Christine Palmer's Apiary at  
The Rectory, Brighstone.  
Tel: 740267 Grid Ref: 429826

**SATURDAY 11th JULY at 2.30p.m.**  
\* Brian Holden's Out Apiary.  
Venue details to be announced later.



*A recent meeting*



# The Island's Own Affliction

Whole books have been written on the disease which decimated Island bees in the early part of the last century. Older members still remember it and the remedies we used to treat it. Modern research now casts doubts on the conclusions that were reached at the time but what happened here is not open to doubt .

Records show that colonies were dying inexplicably from about 1904 onwards. In July 1906 Harry Cooper's warning letter appeared in the County Press. In order to prevent a nationwide epidemic he urged Islanders not to export Island bees to the mainland.

Reproduced by national newspapers the letter evoked a sarcastic reply from BBKA executive who poured scorn on Harry's prediction of a nationwide scourge saying that the malady was nothing new. Until his death, Harry carried a deep resentment about the way he had been portrayed as an ignorant scaremonger.

The Board of Agriculture thought the problem worth investigation and commissioned Mr. A.D. Imms of Cambridge University to visit the Island in 1907. His conclusions were inconclusive but opened with the following observation:-  
*The Isle of Wight Beekeepers term the disease "paralysis" but the bees do not bear the symptoms of the disease which bears that name.*

The Board sent another scientist in May 1908 who found so few occupied hives over here that he too could propose no solution.

By 1908 the BBKA executive began to act differently as the trouble was now rife on the mainland. Re-stocking with imported bees was recommended. Since then the trouble seems to have abated. But a number of scientists have professed certainty as to the cause.

In 1909 Zander said "It was Nosema"

In 1912 the Ministry of Agriculture agreed

In 1916 Professor Rennie said it certainly was not Nosema

In 1919 Elsie Harvey working with Rennie found the acarine mite

In 1927 stationmaster Frow discovered a way to kill acarine mites

In 1991 Dr L. Bailey of Rothamsted asserted that acarine mite is not able to cause the symptoms associated with Isle of Wight Disease

So what did cause the trouble? The experimental work carried out at Rothamsted since 1990 points to Chronic Paralysis Virus and suggests that this disease is with us all the time but that conditions early in the 20th century were particularly favourable to its spread. Worryingly in 2009 laboratory reports have given rise to fears that this ailment is still causing trouble on the Island.

## Running Our Early Meetings

In 1927 the minutes record the visits to three apiaries. This broke new ground and summer visits became the general practice as the years went by. At first there were only three visits to the homes of Miss Pring, Mr. Quinton and Mr. Rogers. As at that time the membership stood at 45 and transport was always by bus, one can assume that the visits were attended by a limited number. Gradually the programme grew more adventurous and by 1939 the summer programme lists seven apiary visits. Three of these are in June and four in July. By this time the secretary is Sam Heath and he lists the number of the bus needed to reach each site. Members are asked to advise the host of each meeting if they intend to be present so that sufficient tea can be laid on.

It is not clear from surviving records how the membership was advised about the programme. Certainly there was no monthly circular but both the honey show schedule and the annual general meeting agenda and report were commercially printed. In 1940 it is recorded that 250 pamphlets were printed and distributed.

Notifying members of the coming activities has always been a problem for the Secretary. Early in the sixties a duplicator was purchased for this purpose. Prior to this the monthly circular was laboriously produced on a jelly bed duplicator. The new one required wax sheets to go in the typewriter and dozens of copies were made by turning a handle.

We leaped into modern times in the eighties when the secretary was given a financial incentive to purchase an Amstrad word processor.

### Isle of Wight Beekeepers Association Newsletter for May 1975

Your committee at its meeting last month drew up the following programme. You may care to make note of it in your diary:

Thurs 22 May	Mr. Townsend's apiary at Ashy
Fri 6th June	Mr. Harrison's apiary at Shorwell
Sat 5th July	Mr. Mitcheson's apiary at Wootton
Thurs 17th July	Agricultural Show
Sun Late July	Mr. Johnson's apiary at Godshill
Wed 20th Aug	Mr. Telfer-Davey's apiary at Newbridge
Sat 13th Sept	Air Cdr. Brodie's apiary at Freshwater



# The Saga of Affiliation with Hampshire

Any association that is part of a bigger organisation is always beset with the thorny question of affiliation fees. It was throughout our history a problem which troubled our committees. Prominent in this story is the commanding figure of Mr. H.P. Young who was president of the Hants association for twenty years from 1940 onwards. The chairman of the Hants association took a back seat at the meetings and as the report of the Island delegates shows delegates from affiliated associations began to leave the parent body apparently upset by his conduct of the meetings.

There were rumblings of revolt on the Island when the capitation caused a rise in subscription from 4/6 to 5/6 but fear of losing a voice with BBKA persuaded the committee to stay in the fold.

In 1955 our delegates came back from a meeting in Winchester with an interesting tale. The Basingstoke local association had deserted and were apparently trying to get direct representation in BBKA. Now, at that time it was believed that only associations with a membership of 250 could join the national body directly but this was now open to question.

Matters came to a head at our AGM in 1956 when the following serious discussion took place.

The committee gave the following reasons for dissatisfaction with the Hants Association.

1. The unbusinesslike conduct of meetings
2. The lack of direct communication with the national body.
3. The lack of help from or access to any facilities provided by the Hampshire Association.

Mr. Corbett, a delegate, refuted some of the arguments received from Winchester to support our continuing affiliation.

In conclusion there was a proposal from Commander Rees-Millington that the IWBKA should sever its link and the motion was carried unanimously.

It now only remained for the Association to apply for direct membership of BBKA and in due course this happened.



# Swarming Problems

Since the Association was formed changes in beekeeping have given a different attitude toward swarming. Swarming was encouraged to produce the fresh stocks needed to replace those killed off in skeps sacrificed for the honey they contained. Unclaimed swarms were eagerly sought.

Nowadays, vagrant swarms are often seen as a positive nuisance and local authorities are often inundated with calls for help from worried householders.

The BBKA has a dedicated helpline and by entering a postcode both the address and phone number of a nearby rescue beekeeper will be provided. In the case of the Isle of Wight currently six names of volunteer helpers are given.

A number of our members can tell exciting tales about pursuit of a difficult swarm.

*A Rooftop Rescue*



*Captured at last*



# Public Relations

Over the years the association has taken care to keep friends aware of our activities. At village fetes and similar events members display their produce and publicise our activities.

Visitors at our honey show and at our annual seminar can get a glimpse of specialist activities such as the production of wax candles or making mead.

*Using beeswax demonstration*



*Talk at Ventnor Gardens*



*Terry at Chillerton Show*



*Rob shows off his posh extractor*



# Varroa Mites Arrive

For years Island beekeepers had been alert to the probability that mites would be found in this country. Infestation had spread across Asia and Europe and was known to be present in France. Here on the Island we knew that the little invaders had two watery barriers, the channel and the Solent to cross before they arrived on the Island so perhaps we were safe for the moment. Having been told to continue testing with a puff of tobacco smoke we dutifully did this.

In 1992 a beekeeper in Torbay found he had been infested. Amazingly within six months, apiaries at Limerstone and Rookley were found to contain mites. No one can be certain of the means by which they got here but as we all know their capacity to multiply and invade is prodigious. In a way it has transformed Isle of Wight Beekeeping methods.

The occasional treatment with Apistan is not now the cure all and integrated pest management means more work for the beekeeper.

To test for infestation, beekeepers need to insert a tray to catch fallen mites. A test insert is placed in the hive and after a few days there will probably be hundreds of dead mites on the tray. A better alternative is now suggested by our association a routine treatment every spring is now recommended



*Part of a test tray showing a heavy infestation*



*Varroa destructor  
What a suitable name*

# Combating Disease

In 1937 the Committee met to discuss the new "Foul Brood Scheme" and both Mr. H.P. Young of the Hants Association and Mr. Herrod-Hempsall came to explain it. It involved the inspection of colonies by named officers and their destruction if found to be infected. No record was made as to decisions at this time but there was an outbreak of AFB in 1944 and permission was granted to appoint our own inspectors.

Sam Heath was one. It is obvious from later events that he took his duties seriously. He is reputed to say that no bees ever got the better of him. He operated without gloves and was not too gentle in his movements. Both Sam and the spectators often got seriously attacked.

His reign as inspector ended in controversy when he visited the apiary of a Mr. Coates without notice and when complaints were made about him at an extraordinary General Meeting he tendered his resignation, both as inspector and as Secretary of the Association. It took some time to find another secretary.

Doug Roberts was appointed inspector to cover East Wight and Rob Marshall to cover West Wight.

The duties of the appointed officer was to visit, sometimes by bike, any bees where it was reasonable to suppose disease might be present. In 1945 it was estimated that there were 250 beekeepers on the Island but only 72 belonged to our association.

Some sceptics claimed, and not without reason, that the allowance for extra sugar allocated to beekeepers during rationing had encouraged a number of phantom beekeepers to register and inspectors sometimes called only to find neither hives or bees.

Rob Marshall wrote:-

When I visited Barney Moses at Bonchurch he said:

*"The bees all swarmed away and took the hive with them".*

Any comb suspected of AFB infection was posted in a special cardboard box to the Rothamsted Experimental station where a microscopic examination was conducted.

Later, of course full time Ministry Inspectors took over the task. In recent years few outbreaks have occurred and most years there are none. On the mainland EFB which affects unsealed broods is rife but it seems to be no threat on the Island.



## Financial Matters

The Association has always been kept on financially sound footings. Over the years it has been increasingly expensive to belong and for this we can see two major reasons.

The capitation or the fee that we pay for belonging to a parent organisation continues to grow. When we first joined with BBKA it was an organisation run by one secretary, Commander Dixon, and he operated the whole organisation from his own front room on the Isle of Sheppey. A bigger staff now has purpose built headquarters at Stoneleigh and the drive to put all beekeepers on a national database entails a great deal more work by our administrators and of course a bigger burden on our treasurer.

Insurance is now a real worry to us all. The claim against our member, John Alder was settled out of court by BBKA despite the weakness of the claim because the insurers said it was the cheapest option. Other claimants joining the compensation bandwagon have caused our annual payments to BBKA to rise even further.

There is a silver lining to every cloud. Our silver lining over the years is one that has allowed us to keep our subscriptions down – the Annual Auction. This popular event has been held at venues all over the Island. The first was at Freshwater in the early sixties and there have been auctions nearly every year since.



*Terry begins the auction at Noke Common*

# Educational Courses

In recent years the Association has held a spring seminar and to this we have invited lecturers from the mainland to keep us up to date. These seminars grew out of the regular spring courses that were started by Harry Carter in the seventies.

At this time the local authority Education Committee was still able to support the Association financially and we were granted free use of the College facilities. The lecturers at these course were home grown. Harry himself ran them for some years but later on the talents of other members were used. In the course which ran for six weeks in early 1984 the speakers were:-

- |    |                                   |   |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Mr. O.H. Frazer                   | Relations of the Honey Bee                |
| 2. | Mr. P. Lovely                     | Bees as Insects                           |
| 3. | Mr J. Ford and<br>Mr. H. Williams | Wines and Mead                            |
| 4. | Mr. H. Carter                     | Beekeeping Handicrafts                    |
| 5. | Mr. R. Marshall                   | Another look at the Isle of Wight Disease |
| 6. | Panel of experts                  | Your questions answered                   |

## Our Own Magazine

In the Autumn of 1985 Harry Carter brought out the first issue of Wight Bee. It was never intended to be a monthly magazine and we are now looking for a new Editor

There have been a succession of editors each of whom has brought new ideas for its format and content. It has resisted the temptation to be a reprint of national and international news. It is truly an Island Magazine.





## *A Roll of Honour*

*That the Association has lasted for a hundred years is in itself a tribute to the many who have given time and effort to ensured its vigorous survival.*

*We have had six treasurers over this period. Doug Roberts and Ken Holland between them clocked up over eighty years. Barry Walsh had a lot to live up to especially as the task was so much more demanding with increased membership, (135 in October 2010) and the requirements of the administrators at B.B.K.A. Barry retired this year and Roger Hall has agreed to shoulder the difficult task*

*The secretaryship has been held by Sam Heath, Wally Redfern, Rob Marshall, Julia Starling, Mary Case, and Natalie Mumberson, all having made their unique contribution.*

*Chairmen of the Association traditionally move aside after a few years. In recent times, Telfer Davey, David Belben, David Parr, Terry Willis and Dave Cassell have conducted our affairs with good humoured efficiency.*