

THEME: SWARMING

# Swarming

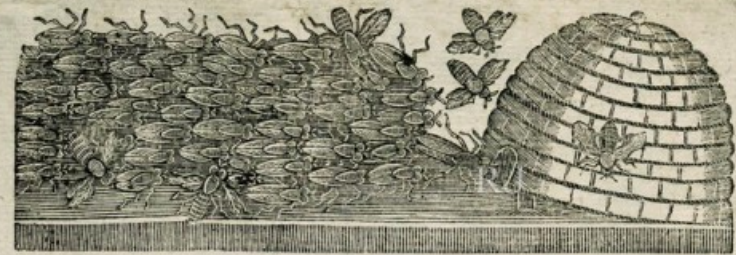
THEME: SWARMING

Ringling or 'tanging' a swarm took place by beating on pans or kettles when bees were swarming.

## THEME: SWARMING

'June 20 1772 Exhibition of bees on horseback! At the Jubilee Gardens, Islington, this and every evening until further notice (wet evenings excepted). The celebrated Daniel Wildman will exhibit several new and amazing experiments, never attempted by any man in this or any other kingdom before. The riders standing upright, one foot on the saddle and one on the neck, with a mask of bees on his head and face. He also rides standing upright on the saddle with the bridle in his mouth, and by firing a pistol makes one part of the bees march over the table, and the other swarm in the air and return to their hive again, with other performances too tedious to insert.'

Copy of advertisement for Daniel Wildman's Bee Master show



At WILDMAN's Exhibition Room,  
Opposite Southampton-street, in the Strand,  
By Desire of several of the Nobility and Gentry,  
**Mr. W I L D M A N**  
W I L L E X H I B I T,

This and every Day, at Twelve o'Clock in the Forenoon, precisely;  
And as his Stay in London will be short, he will perform at Seven every Evening,  
as usual.

At each Time he will display  
All his amazing Performances and different Changes  
with the B E E S.

To which will be added, his new invented and extraordinary  
**DEXTERITY and DECEPTIONS,**  
In a most astonishing Manner,

Such as were never performed before by any other Person in this Kingdom.  
Many different amazing Deceptions each Time.  
The Room is warm and commodious, and will be illuminated with Wax Lights in the  
Evening.

FRONT SEATS Two Shillings, BACK SEATS One Shilling.

Places to be taken and Tickets to be had at the Exhibition Room.

A PRIVATE EXHIBITION may be had if desired.

N. B. Fine Virgin Honey to be sold either in the Combs or out; also his new invented Hives, either  
for the Chamber or Garden, and any Quantity of Bees, from one Stock to one Hundred

THEME: SWARMING

The best time for drivinge of bees is from the 20th of June to the first of July, because that by this time bees have gathered together some quantity of honey, wheareof some money and profite may arise to the owner; and likewise from this time till Michaelmass [29th Sept.] they will againe recover and gather together livinge enough and store to keepe them over winter.

Seventeenth-century instructions concerning when to drive the bees out of the hives in order to collect honey.

## THEME: SWARMING

A swarm of bees is a magical event. The bees are very docile and won't sting unless they are actually trapped or squeezed. You can put your bare hands underneath the swarm and feel the weight of bees. Beekeepers say it's an easy thing to catch a swarm (providing they are in an easy to reach location).

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

Some people still practise 'tanging' to encourage a swarm to land. It's unclear if it actually works though.

Similarly, anecdotes recount the sonic boom of low flying jets that drive a swarm to the ground.

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: SWARMING

## **Charm for a Swarm of Bees**

Take earth with your right hand and throw it under your right foot, saying:

"I've got it, I've found it:

Lo, earth masters all creatures,  
it masters evil, it masters deceit,  
it masters humanity's greedy tongue."

Throw light soil over them [the bees] as they swarm, saying:

"Sit, wise women, settle on earth:  
never in fear fly to the woods.  
Please be mindful of my welfare  
as all men are of food and land."

Taken from: <http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/young/ky-chrm.htm>

THEME: SWARMING

A swarm of bees in May  
Is worth a load of hay;  
A swarm of bees in June  
Is worth a silver spoon;  
A swarm of bees in July  
Is not worth a fly.

– A 17th century folk saying/rhyme



THEME: SWARMING

A swarm that lands in a neighbour's property technically becomes their swarm. It would be frowned upon for neighbouring beekeepers to deliberately set bait traps to entice swarms into their own property. (Bait traps in general however are beneficial.)

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: SWARMING

Contemporary beekeeping management is largely all about preventing and managing swarming.

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: LOCALISM

# Localism

THEME: LOCALISM

It is written that it used to be considered unlucky to 'buy' bees, they should be exchanged for other goods, given, or bought using gold coin only.

## THEME: LOCALISM

Some people have suggested that honey consumption may be linked to a reduced risk of allergies, especially when the honey comes from local bees, which presumably visit many of the plants involved in provoking a local allergy sufferer's symptoms. According to this popular belief, exposure to local honey works somewhat like a vaccine against local allergens by exposing people to the pollen that ordinarily causes an allergic response.

<http://www.healthline.com/health/allergies/honey-remedy>

THEME: LOCALISM

There is a tension between commercial beekeeping practices and hobbyist beekeepers around the importing of queens (and colonies) from abroad, potentially introducing diseases and less hardy bees. Obtaining local bees or feral swarms is much preferred.

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: LOCALISM

## **St. Gobnait - Patron of Honeybees and Beekeepers**

Her connection to honey bees is complex, beginning with the angel telling her to find her "resurrection place," where the soul leaves the body. In Celtic mythology, the soul was thought to depart the body as a bee or a butterfly. Bees have long held an important place in Irish culture, and ancient laws were called the Bech Bretha ("Bee Judgments").

Honey is well-known for its curative properties, and Gobnait was renowned for her care of the sick. She is said to have had a strong relationship with bees and used honey in the treatment of illness and healing of wounds.

<http://saintspreserved.com/buzz/about-st-gobnait/>

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

# Telling the Bees



## THEME: TELLING THE BEES

If thou wilt have the favor of thy bees, that they sting thee not, thou must avoid such things as offend them; thou must not be unchaste or uncleanly; for impurity and sluttiness (themselves being most chaste and neat) they utterly abhor; thou must not come among them smelling of sweat, or having stinking breath, caused either through the eating of leek, onions, garlick and the like, or by other means, the noisomeness whereof is corrected by a cup of beer; thou must not come puffing or blowing unto them, neither hastily stir among them, nor resolutely defend thyself when they seem to threaten thee; but softly moving thy hand before thy face, gently put them by; and lastly, thou must be no stranger to them. In a word thou must be chaste, cleanly, sweet, sober, chaste, quiet, and familiar, so they will love thee.

Columella – roman writer on agriculture, quoted in Tickner Edwardes 'The Lore of the Honey-Bee' 1908

## THEME: TELLING THE BEES

It is well known that the bee is a lover of sweet odors, and that unpleasant ones are very apt to excite its anger. And here I may as well speak plainly, and say that bees have a special dislike to persons whose habits are not cleanly. Those who belong to the family of the "great unwashed," will find to their cost that bees are decided foes to all of their tribe. The peculiar odor of some persons, however cleanly, may account for the fact that the bees have such a decided antipathy to their presence, in the vicinity of their hives. It is related of an enthusiastic Apiarian, that after a long and severe attack of fever, he was never able to take any more pleasure in his bees; his secretions seem to have undergone some change, so that the bees assailed him as soon as he ventured to approach their hives. Nothing is more offensive to bees than the impure breath exhaled from human lungs; it excites them at once to fury. Would that in their hatred for impure air, human beings had only a tithe of the sagacity exercised by bees! It would not be long before the thought of breathing air loaded with all manner of impurities from human lungs, to say nothing of its loss of oxygen, would excite unutterable loathing and disgust. As the smell of a sweaty horse is very offensive to the bees, it is never safe to allow these animals to go near a hive, as they are sometimes attacked and killed by the furious insects.

– Rev. LL Langstroth, *The Honey Bee and the Hive*, 1853

## THEME: TELLING THE BEES

In 1892 a woman in Staffordshire, who had forgotten to tell the bees of her husband's death, some time after found all the hives deserted except one, so in order to save this she gave the hive to her little boy, and then told the bees they had a new master and must work for him.

Hilda Ransome, p220

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

**“Bees instinctively hate black dogs.”**

- W S Robson, 2011, Reflections on Beekeeping.

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

“...the bees can access the ability and demeanour of individual beekeepers...”

- W S Robson, 2011, Reflections on Beekeeping.

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

Bees don't like leather gloves, they will sting these far more readily than purple nitrile gloves.

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

Bees don't like black (clothes, pens, gloves etc.). Bees aren't supposed to like horses or dogs (but mixed evidence for this in reality).

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

Beekeepers often talk to bees, even if it's just a 'Come on then, are you going to be nice bees today?'

- Interview observations (paraphrased)



THEME: TELLING THE BEES

Like people, bee colonies can have very distinct personalities. Not all colonies are equal! Sometimes it is said that 'buzzy' or 'angry' bees are more productive.

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

Whilst some keepers think that their bees might recognise them on some level most don't seem to believe that the bees know their keeper.

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: TELLING THE BEES

“Waving the Bees” – hanging clothes from family members near to the hives to familiarise the bees with the motion and scent of keeper and family, to encourage the bees to not treat them as threats.

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

THEME: DISEASE MANAGEMENT

# Disease Management

THEME: DISEASE MANAGEMENT

**“Bees don’t read books.”**

## THEME: DISEASE MANAGEMENT

The varroa mite (discovered in England in 1992) has radically changed the management of bees. No longer can you install a hive at the bottom of the garden and come back a few months later to gather honey. There is some suggestion that this forced increased management is a good thing...

- Interview observations (paraphrased)

## THEME: DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Treatments for varroa include: wire mesh at the bottom of the hive, encouraging bees to draw out sacrificial comb for drone brood, dusting icing sugar on the bees, using lavender oil, oxalic acid, varroacides. Different treatments are used at different times of the year.

## THEME: DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Yow are to take an handfull of balme and an handfull of fennell and halfe a meate dishfull of the freshest and sweetest creame that yow can gette, and soe to dippe the fennell and balme in the creame and to rubbe the hive well before yow putte in either the crowne-pinne or the spelles

Seventeenth-century instructions for preparing a hive