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**ECTD\_282**

**TITLE:** Early English beekeeping: the evidence from local records up to the end of the Norman period

**SOURCE:** Local Historian: 29(3): 130 - 151

**DATE:** 1999

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Reprinted from  
*The Local Historian*

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• Volume 29 • Number 3 • August 1999 •

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• EVA CRANE AND PENELOPE WALKER •

This is the first systematic exploration of extant local source references up to the early thirteenth century. In England hive beekeeping was done from pre-Roman times, probably introduced from continental Europe into eastern England and spread west from there. Anglo-Saxon references to beeswax, honey and mead are quoted and discussed, including the use of honey to pay rents and other dues. Domesday Book contains several hundred entries about honey or hives, which have been studied as a whole for the first time and are cited in an Appendix. Together, they provide the earliest direct evidence, in 1086, that beekeeping was widespread in England.

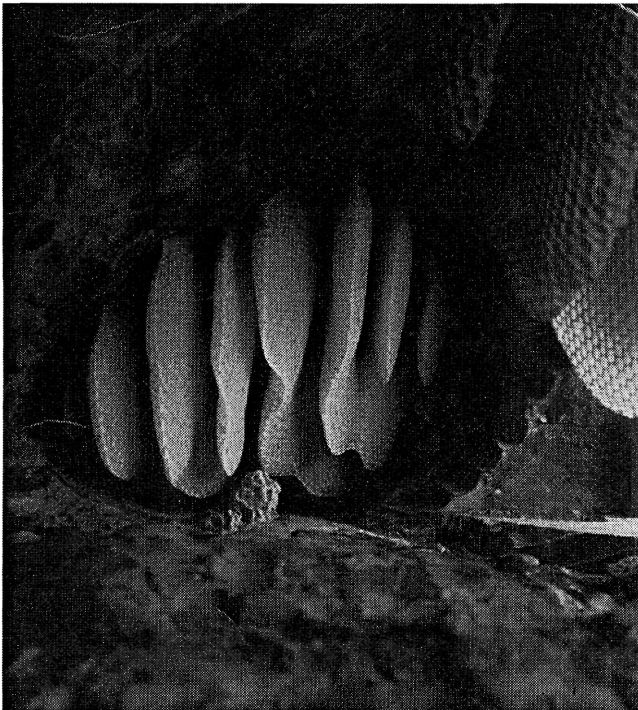


# Early English beekeeping: the evidence from local records up to the end of the Norman period

• EVA CRANE AND PENELOPE WALKER •

Bees were almost certainly kept in hives in England from pre-Roman times.<sup>1</sup> However, the first documentary evidence of hive beekeeping is from the Anglo-Saxon period. This article is the first systematic exploration of extant local source material related to beekeeping, from the earliest references up to the early thirteenth century, and especially of the several hundred entries about honey or hives in Domesday Book. The available evidence is brought together and analysed to see what can be learned about the extent and practice of English hive beekeeping, the types of hive, the honey yields, and what was done with the bee products.

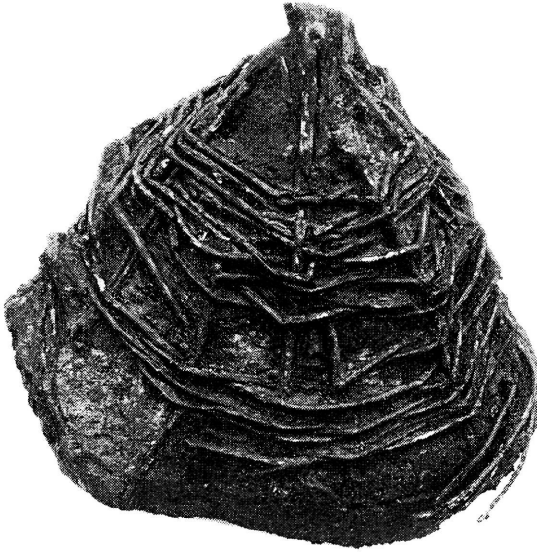
Shorter documentary references appear in the following text; longer extracts follow in two Appendices.



1. Bees' nest in a hollow tree viewed from below; the bees have been removed to show the comb structure (photographer unknown).

## Hive beekeeping in England

Before bees were kept in hives, honey was obtained from wild nests, which would have been widespread in woodland. In England bees' nests were usually in old trees with cavities large enough to be acceptable to a swarm seeking a nest site (Figure 1). Swarms continued to nest in such cavities long after hives were used in an area. Domesday Book contains a few direct references to renders of honey produced in woods or forest, and this honey was probably collected from wild nests (see Appendix 2).<sup>2</sup> A charter of c. 1155–58 confirming a gift of land to Haughmond Abbey in Shropshire referred to bees in a wood: 'if a servant finds a swarm (*examina*) of bees in his wood, he shall give up one half of it [its produce] or he can keep the whole if it is not wanted'.<sup>3</sup>



**2. Woven wicker** from the period AD 1-200, probably the top part of a skep—the earliest known. Feddersen Wierde, Lower Saxony. (W. Haarnagel, see F. Ruttner, *Allgemeine deutsche Imkerzeitung*, 11 (9), (1977), 259).

Hive beekeeping was almost certainly introduced into eastern England from north-west continental Europe, probably by Celtic peoples, and transmitted from east to west across England.<sup>4</sup> The hives were inverted baskets known as skeps, made of woven wicker (see Figures 2 and 4). At some period after about AD 500, skeps of coiled straw (see Figure 3) were introduced by the Saxons who settled in eastern England,<sup>5</sup> and their use also spread westward. Until the late nineteenth century, when these skeps were gradually superseded by wooden movable-frame hives, they were the most common hive in England, and beekeeping methods had changed remarkably little since Saxon times.

In north-west Europe including England, skep beekeepers depended on getting and using swarms.<sup>6</sup> Skeps were small, and the bees became overcrowded so that they swarmed in early summer. In swarming, about half the bees (with the queen) left a crowded hive and clustered nearby, and the bees remaining in the parent hive reared a new queen. The hives were watched during the swarming season, and if a swarm flew out and settled on a tree branch the beekeeper could 'take' it by shaking it into an empty hive, and both it and the parent colony were likely to store honey. Sometimes the parent colony produced one or more further swarms, and the first swarm might itself later produce a



3. Later straw skep on a stand under a shelter (T. Bewick, *Select fables* (1784)).

swarm. At the end of summer the beekeeper killed the bees in some hives to harvest the honey and wax in them. He overwintered others as 'stock' hives (like stock cattle); he left all their honey and might give them extra honey combs as well. In late summer he could thus have two or three times as many occupied hives as during the winter and early spring. After the bees in a skep were killed, honey combs were cut out, broken up, and put into a cloth bag to drain; the bag was finally squeezed to extract more honey. Any honey still adhering to the combs was soaked off in water from which mead was made.

### The documentary evidence, excluding Domesday Book

#### Hives, beekeepers and beekeeping

The earliest known written evidence about hive beekeeping in England dates from c. 705. In his book *De laude virginittatis sive de virginittate sanctorum*, Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury in Wiltshire and later bishop of Sherborne in Dorset, mentioned hives made of wicker (*vimen* = osier. See Figure 4).<sup>7</sup> This suggests that hives of coiled straw had not reached Wessex by his time, but perhaps Aldhelm was not writing specifically about Wessex. He also mentioned hives of bark (*corticibus*), which are known in some southern parts of Europe but not in England. Aldhelm seems to have been fond of both bees and honey. In a letter to Bishop Wilfrid's clergy in Northumbria after the bishop had been exiled, Aldhelm compared the devotion between the bishop and his clergy to the way in which a swarm of bees follows the movements of its leader.<sup>8</sup>

*Ceo est hosebonderie* was written in Anglo-Norman in the thirteenth century. As far as is known, the beekeeping passage it contains is the only source of information about beekeeping practices in England at this time.<sup>9</sup> Beekeeping conditions and methods had probably been similar during the preceding centuries. A French commentary on this passage speculated that the English manor had hives which needed little attention. According to *Ceo est hosebonderie*, the total annual amount of honey to be expected from a well managed hive and the swarms issuing from it was about a gallon (6.4 kg at a relative density of 1.4). Subtracting the amount used for feeding stock hives, the average net yield expected per stock hive would be rather less than a gallon, say 5½ kg. The honey yield could, however, vary greatly from year to year.



4. The last known wicker skeps in use in England, north Herefordshire, 1880s. Each had been protected by a straw hackle (Photo: A. Watkins, Hereford City Library no. 1654).

## Honey, beeswax and the use of bee products

Honey may have been used in the Neolithic period; in the analysis of a sherd from a pot found at Runnymede Bridge on the River Thames, the presence of beeswax, glucose and resin suggested that the pot had once held honey.<sup>10</sup> The only evidence connected with bees known to us from Roman times is an entry *lini mellari* in a tablet found at Vindolanda, Hadrian's Wall. This 'honey cloth' or 'beekeeping cloth', which was on a list of items supplied to the Roman garrison *c.* AD 100, might have been used to strain honey or to confine bees in a hive while they were being moved.<sup>11</sup>

Mead is an alcoholic drink produced by fermenting honey in water. It was probably being made in England by the Bronze Age or earlier,<sup>12</sup> but the first evidence for its use dates from the 400s, the 500s and 900s, when intoxication by mead was mentioned in connection with battles in Kent, Yorkshire and Essex, respectively. In describing the banquet after Hengest killed some 4,000 Britons, the Welsh bard Golyddan said: 'Conceive the intoxication at the great banquet of mead' (Kent, *c.* 456).<sup>13</sup> The Yorkshire reference to mead is in a poem referring to the Welsh attack on Catraeth (Catterick) which was in English hands. Three hundred Welsh warriors were killed during the battle, after they had feasted on mead, and the poem contrasts the sweetness of the mead with the bitterness of the subsequent tragedy.<sup>14</sup> A later poem on the battle of Maldon in Essex (*c.* 991) also refers to mead-drinking.<sup>15</sup> Another literary source, the poem 'Widsith', arguably the earliest Anglo-Saxon poem, dating from the 600s, refers to a mead hall;<sup>16</sup> other poems mentioning mead include 'The husband's message', 'The wanderer' and 'The seafarer'.<sup>17</sup> The poem 'Beowulf', which probably originated *c.* 700, refers many times to mead. Scott Moncrieff's translation includes the terms mead-bowl, mead-place, mead-hall and mead-benches.<sup>18</sup> Lines 2015-17 read:

... Nor in all my life saw I  
Under heaven's vault, among sitters in hall,  
More joy in their mead.

The earliest references to mead are literary ones, but by the tenth century there is some local historical evidence about its use and role in contemporary society. Aethelwold, bishop of Winchester (fl. 963–75), allowed his monks a sextorium (15 pints) of mead between six of them at dinner, and the same quantity between twelve brothers at supper on festival days.<sup>19</sup> At Abbot Ufi's anniversary the brothers at the abbey of Bury St Edmunds were to have charitable gifts of '40 pence for mead' and also '4 pence for mead' (1045–98).<sup>20</sup> Harold Godwinson prepared for a banquet at Hereford, and among the drinks provided were mead, wine, ale, pigment [pymment, made from wine and honey], morat and cider (1042–66).<sup>21</sup> In a Wessex charter issued in 1053 by King Edward, his mead-maker Payn was one of four sokemen who held the estate of Eversley, Hampshire.<sup>22</sup>

A great deal of the honey produced in Wales was destined for mead to be drunk at the court of the king or of a lord. Twice a year freemen had to pay entertainment dues (*gwestfa*) to the king for his bread, his savoury, and his drink. A free township with the king's local administrative officer had to supply 'the worth of a vat of mead to the king, which ought to be capacious enough for the king and his adult companion to bathe in it'.<sup>23</sup> According to Ransome, *gwestfa* was also paid in English counties on the Welsh border.<sup>24</sup> The Ancient Welsh Laws—written in the 1200s but based on earlier material—said more about mead than about honey.<sup>25</sup>

Where wax was mentioned in documents it signified beeswax. This wax, secreted by worker bees, was the substance of which combs were built. The beekeeper put honey combs in water when making mead, and afterwards washed them in clean water which was heated to melt them. The cleaned wax solidified in a layer at the top. The Welsh king's mead brewer was paid in beeswax: his due was one-third of the wax left in the vat after the mead was made.<sup>26</sup> Beeswax had been of great significance in the Christian Church from the time of Ambrose, bishop of Milan. It was used for candles, as a symbol of the virginity of Mary, Mother of Christ.<sup>27</sup> According to Fraser, wax was not mentioned in Anglo-Saxon documents until after the introduction of Christianity to England. The Abbotsbury Guild statutes (Wessex) dating from c. 1042–45 refer to a payment 'three days before St Peter's mass, from each guild-brother one penny or one pennyworth of wax, whichever there is the greater need of, to the minster ...'.<sup>28</sup> An earlier document from Wessex, Asser's *Life of King Alfred* (871–99), is important in that the king seems to have been the first to make candles with which the passage of time could be measured.<sup>29</sup>

Beeswax candles were a significant part of the allowances to great officers of state, and beeswax fetched such a high price that even candle-ends were a valuable perquisite—and continued to be so up to the time of George III.<sup>30</sup> (Tallow was used for making cheap candles, since cheaper mineral waxes were not available until much later.) Shortly after the death of Henry I in 1135 the establishment of the king's household—set out in *Constitutio domus regis*—included the daily allowances of wax candles and 'pieces of candle' (candle-ends). Officials from the chancellor down were allocated a candle of a certain size, and/or pieces of candle. Officials warranting a 'fat candle' included the chancellor, the chamberlain of the exchequer and the master of the writing office. The watchman, who presumably worked at night, had four candles.<sup>31</sup>

## The value of beekeeping to the crown, or to the lord of the manor

A high value was set on bees in the reign of King Alfred of Wessex (c. 885–99): his laws





5. Log hives being tithed (*Sachsenspiegel*, Meissen, c. 1375, from L. Armbruster, *Archiv für Bienenkunde*, 19 (1938), 246. In use, these hives were stood upright.

stated that 'formerly, [the fine] for the stealer of gold, the stealer of stud-horses, the stealer of bees, and many fines, were greater than others; now all are alike, except for the stealer of a man: 120 shillings.'<sup>32</sup> In Edward the Confessor's reign (1042–66) tithes were payable on bees as a proportion of their produce, or one hive in ten (see Figure 5).<sup>33</sup> From very early in the same century comes a passage from *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* (see Figure 6), which has been regarded as the most important Anglo-Saxon document referring to beekeeping.<sup>34</sup> It defined the duties and privileges of the various grades of people bound to the land, including those of the bee churl and swineherd who belonged to the lowest rank of free men. Similarly, on the estate of Tidenham, Gloucestershire, granted to the abbot of Bath, it was held (c. 1060) that 'The boor must do what is due from him ... He shall give 6 pence after Easter and half a sester of honey'.<sup>35</sup>

The payment of rents in honey was recorded in Wessex in the laws of King Ine (688–94), and in Surrey.<sup>36</sup> In a charter of c. 832 from Mongeham [Mundlingham] in Kent, Lady Lufa, a nun, bequeathed various items including a 'mittan fulne huniges', that is a horseload of honey, as an annual rent to Canterbury Cathedral.<sup>37</sup> A food rent paid annually from Offley, Hertfordshire, to St Alban's Abbey in the late 900s included one sester of honey,<sup>38</sup> and a writ of 1066 issued to Wuduman, keeper of Queen Edith's horses, stated that 'for six years [he] has withheld her rent in honey and in cash'.<sup>39</sup> In a document dating from c. 883, Aethelred, aldorman of Mercia, freed the abbot of Berkeley from, among other items, a tax owed to the king which was payable in honey. A Wessex charter of c. 987 of Ealdorman Aethetmaer, son of Aethelwerd, stated: 'Tithes of honey [and other items] from his other lands are to go to Cerne Abbey with the produce of Cerne'.<sup>40</sup>

### The evidence from entries in Domesday Book

Our interest in Domesday Book, as an extensive source of local information about beekeeping and its products, was aroused by finding in the Library of the International

**B**eo ceople ze byned 7 if he ȝafol heorde  
healt þ he fülle don lande ze næd beo.

m:ð us if ze næd þ he fülle . v. sustnas huniges to  
ȝafole . Onsuman landū ze byned mane ȝafol  
næden . ꝛac he sceal hpil tādū ȝeara beon onma  
nezum peorcū to hlaforides pillan . to eacan  
benynde 7 bedripe 7 mæd mæpette . 7 ȝyf he  
pel ze lend bið he sceal beon ze horsad þ he  
mæge to hlaforides seame þ fyllan . oððe fylf  
lædan . spæden him man tæce . 7 þela ðinga  
spægenad man sceal don . eal ic nu atellan  
ne mærg . ðonne him forð sið ze bynige hede  
se hlaforid ðæs he læpe bute hpæt fnyges fy .

6. Part of *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* (CCCC MS 383, by courtesy of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge). Translation in Appendix 1, document 6.

Bee Research Association a file of handwritten extracts made by the late Graham Burt in the 1920s, using the county translations then available. Small selections of entries in Domesday Book relating to beekeeping have been published subsequently by various authors,<sup>41</sup> and the entries about hives and those for honey renders in relation to other forms of payment have been discussed by Darby.<sup>42</sup> However, no comprehensive study of the entries related to beekeeping seems to have been attempted until now. We have based our analysis of the material on the Phillimore edition of Domesday Book (1970–86, general editor, John Morris).

The Domesday Book entries provide detailed information about the extent of beekeeping and transfers of honey in England, but rather little about beekeeping practices. Entries for some places stated the number of sesters of honey paid annually (see Table 1), and in a few cases there are references to hives and beekeepers. Little Domesday (covering Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk) gave the number of hives of bees held in several hundred places in these counties (summarized in Table 2). Replies to a question asked by the Commissioners about the number of villagers, cottagers and slaves occasionally mentioned beekeepers and their work, and a question about the amount of woodland, meadow and pasture produced some information about honey from the wild nests of bees in the woods of four counties.

**Table 1**  
**Number of places where**  
**Domesday Book recorded honey renders**

Other entries related to beekeeping are noted here, except that numbers of hives in Little Domesday are in Table 2.

A number in brackets represents the honey renders commuted to money payments by 1086.

County	Honey renders	Other entries	County	Honey renders	Other entries
Bedfordshire	3		Middlesex	-	
Berkshire	-		Norfolk	13 (8)	no. hives (see Table 2)
Buckinghamshire	-		Northamptonshire	1	
Cambridgeshire	8 (7)		Nottinghamshire	2 (1)	
Cheshire	-		Oxfordshire	2	
Cornwall	-		Rutland	-	
Derbyshire	3		Shropshire	-	1 beekeeper
Devon	1	5 beekeepers	Somerset	-	
Dorset	2		Staffordshire	-	
[Durham]	-	1 beekeeper	Suffolk	3 (2)	no. hives (see Table 2)
Essex	1	no. hives (see Table 2)	Surrey	-	
Gloucestershire	7 (1)		Sussex	2	
Hampshire	2		Warwickshire	2	
Herefordshire	24 (1)	1 beekeeper with 12 hives	Wiltshire	2	9 beekeepers
Hertfordshire	-		Worcestershire	8	
[Huntingdonshire]	-	4 hives	Yorkshire	-	
Kent	1				
Leicestershire	1 (1)				
Lincolnshire	-				
			Total	88 (21)	

**Table 2**  
**Records of hives in 1086, in Little Domesday**

	Essex	Norfolk	Suffolk	Total
No. of places with hives	131 of 442 (30%)	85 of 734 (16%)	76 of 646 (12%)	292 of 1822 (16%)
Total no. of hives	601	418	350	1369
Average no. per place	4.6	4.9	4.6	4.6
Highest no. per place	30	27	17	30
Percentage of places with different numbers of hives				
1-4	67%	62%	59%	63%
5-9	23%	25%	32%	26%
10-14	7%	7%	8%	7%
15 or more	4%	6%	1%	4%

All bee-related references found in Domesday Book are cited in Appendix 2. They are listed in alphabetical order of the county name and, within a county, in alphabetical order of the present place-name. The lists of places with hives in Suffolk and Essex were cross-checked against lists compiled by Burt and Fraser.<sup>43</sup> Some discrepancies were found in places entered as having hives, but very few in the number of hives or the amount of a honey render at a certain place. Similar discrepancies between different commentaries were noted by Darby in his discussion.<sup>44</sup>

### Places recorded as having hives, and the number and type of hives

The Commissioners recorded only stock that belonged to the demesne manor; such stock was included in the lease and had to be accounted for by the lessee at the end of his term. Casual profits on a manor (such as those from bees) were mentioned only in assessments of the total value, so lack of references to hives does not necessarily mean that no bees were kept in a place.

Little Domesday recorded the presence and number of hives at 292 places in Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk (see Appendix 2 and, for 1086 only, Table 2). On average, hives were entered for 16 per cent of the places surveyed. At 30 places one hive was entered; only about a third of places with hives had more than four, and the highest number was between 17 and 30. The county averages were 4.4, 4.9 and 4.6, respectively. Fraser published a map of Essex showing the places with hives, and commented that 'the north of the county contained many more hives than the south'.<sup>45</sup> It was explained earlier that the number of hives containing bees would have been at least two or three times as high in summer as in winter. A Domesday entry does not indicate whether the number recorded at a place was the number found on the occasion of the Commissioners' visit, but the low figures suggest that it might have represented only the stock hives which were overwintered.

In the eastern counties of Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk the words used for a hive were *vasa apum* (for example, the entry for Shouldham, Norfolk). This was probably the

coiled-straw skep introduced to eastern England by the Saxons; it was larger than the earlier wicker skep, but still much smaller than a modern hive.<sup>46</sup> In Herefordshire, a beekeeper at Suckley had '*xii vasculos*', small hives which Fraser regarded as wicker skeps.<sup>47</sup> In Suffolk, the term *rusca* or *rusca apum* was used twice; there were two and three, respectively, at Wingfield and Campsey. The medieval Latin word *ruscum* (or *ruscus*) was used for the plant *Ruscus aculeatus* (butcher's broom), and hives might have been woven with its stems instead of osier. On the other hand Legros, writing about Gaul, said that it could have meant a bark hive. Armbruster suggested that bark might have been used as a cover for a hive rather than for the hive itself.<sup>48</sup>

Outside the three eastern counties hives were recorded only at Suckley in Herefordshire. *Inquisitio Eliensis* mentioned four hives at Spaldwick in Huntingdonshire (see Appendix 2).

## Beekkeepers

Hives of bees were recorded in the king's royal demesnes (Appendix 2), and these were the property of the king. Most hives entered elsewhere were the property of the lord of the manor in which they were situated. In two places in Domesday Book, the person who looked after the bees was referred to as *custos apium* (guardian of the bees). One at Suckley in Herefordshire had oversight of 12 hives, but no more is known about the other, at Stokesay in Shropshire. Boldon Book, a survey which was similar in nature to Domesday Book for Durham County, dating from 1181, records at Wolsingham (Wulsyngham), that 'Ralph the keeper of the bees (*custos apium*) [holds] 6 acres for his service in keeping the bees'.<sup>49</sup> Another (plural) term used for beekeepers was *mellitarii*; nine were recorded at Westbury in Wiltshire and five at Sutreworde, possibly now Lustleigh, in Devon.<sup>50</sup> The terms *custos apium* or *mellitarius* would also have been appropriate for a person who checked on the wild nests of bees in the woods or forests throughout the year and collected their honey—probably after killing the bees with sulphur or fire.

## The value of beekeeping to the crown, or to the lord of the manor: honey renders

Entries about hives and honey renders never occur together. In Norfolk, there are 85 entries for the number of places with hives in 1086 and 13 entries which give the amounts of honey rendered by places, but these do not coincide. In Essex only one, and in Suffolk only three, honey renders were entered.

Appendix 2 quotes parts of the 88 entries in Domesday Book that relate to payments of honey in 1066 and/or 1086, from places in 20 counties of the 35 surveyed (Table 1); the most common amount rendered was five or six sesters. Some places rendered less than five sesters, for example Garway forest in Herefordshire paid only half a sester; others rendered more—up to 50 sesters in the case of Pershore in Worcestershire. Several entries in Appendix 2 show that the size of a sester (*sextarium*, a measure of volume) was not the same everywhere, and suggestions as to its size have varied from one pint to four gallons. At different places in Gloucestershire, honey was measured in 'sesters of the King's measure' or 'sesters according to the measure of the Borough [of Gloucester]'. In Warwickshire sesters 'of the larger measure' were used. A sester of honey seemed to be worth 1s. (12*d.*) at Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire and 1s. 3*d.* (15*d.*) at Colchester in Essex. Zupko reckoned a sester of honey to be 32 ounces (2 lb., 0.9 kg.).<sup>51</sup> On this basis, taking the relative density of honey as 1.4, the volume of a sester of

honey would be 0.64 litres. The net annual honey yield of around 5½ kg expected from a well managed hive and its swarms (calculated above) would then be about six sesters.

Other miscellaneous information about honey renders can be gathered from Domesday Book and associated documents. In Archenfield forest, Herefordshire, underpayment of a honey render was punished by a fine of five times the shortfall. In addition to these honey renders, Welshmen owning a plough in Herefordshire, and groups of Welsh villages in Gloucestershire, might pay food rent in honey instead of manorial service.<sup>52</sup> In *Inquisitio Eliensis*, Wulfwin in Histon, Cambridgeshire, who had rendered one sester of honey before 1066, was mentioned as the mead-keeper of Ely Abbey.

In about a quarter of the places in Domesday Book where honey renders were mentioned, they had been commuted to money payments by 1086 (Table 1). King William required money rather than goods; in addition, Fraser suggested that there was a lack of honey in the more settled eastern parts of England, where over half the honey renders had been commuted (see also Table 1).<sup>53</sup> Most other honey payments were commuted after 1086, but Walker and Crane refer to a tithe in Lancashire not commuted until 1847.<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusions

The entries in Domesday Book and its associated documents provide the earliest direct evidence that hive beekeeping was widespread in England. Indications as to the types of hive were found in one Anglo-Saxon document, and in a few Domesday entries. The primary product from bees was honey, and both Anglo-Saxon documents and Domesday Book entries record payments in honey. Other bee products such as mead were mentioned frequently in Anglo-Saxon writings, but there is only one occurrence in the Domesday survey. Several Anglo-Saxon documents refer to beeswax, but no references were found in Domesday Book, and it seems likely that payments in this bee product went directly to the Church, as in later centuries.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate this opportunity to use the work of the late Graham Burt in the 1920s, which stimulated us to explore in depth what was recorded about early beekeeping in England. We also value John Davidson Kelly's help in leading us to a number of sources, especially from the Anglo-Saxon period. We thank the referees for their suggestions, and are indebted to Dr Margaret Bonney who considerably improved the presentation of our material.

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1. E. Crane, *The world history of beekeeping and honey hunting* (London, 1999), Section 27.53.
2. The references are to Hampshire: Eling, Wallop (in Broughton); Herefordshire: Garway; Northamptonshire: Greens Norton; and Worcestershire: Bredon, Fladbury, Ripple. In Worcestershire, honey from the woods was paid not to the king but to the bishop.
3. U. Rees, *The cartulary of Haughmond Abbey* (Cardiff, 1985), no. 530. The word 'swarm' has sometimes been used incorrectly for a colony in a hive or in a wild nest.
4. Crane, *The world history of beekeeping*, p. 256.
5. H. M. Fraser, *History of beekeeping in Britain* (London, 1958), p. 12.
6. Crane, *The world history of beekeeping*, p. 239. The word 'beekeeper' does not appear in English texts until the eighteenth century. Although 'he' is used in the present article, by medieval times both men and women are known to have kept bees.
7. See Appendix 1, document 1.
8. D. Whitelock (ed.), *English historical documents c. 500–1042* (London, 2nd edn., 1979), p. 794n; for other examples of Aldhelm's use of the

- image of bees in devotional writing, see *Aldhelm: the prose works*, trans. by M. Lapidge and M. Herren (Ipswich, 1979), pp. 62-3.
9. See Appendix I, document 2.
  10. S. Needham and J. Evans, 'Honey and dripping: Neolithic food residues from Runnymede Bridge', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 6(1) (1987), 21-8.
  11. Vindolanda Tablet Inventory no. 93/1350; A. R. Birley, personal communication (1995); discussed in Crane, *The world history of beekeeping*, p. 251.
  12. Crane, *The world history of beekeeping*, Section 48.34.
  13. S. Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. 1 (1820), p. 246.
  14. See Appendix I, document 3.
  15. B. K. Gordon, *Anglo-Saxon poetry* (London, 1926, reprinted 1959), p. 333.
  16. Gordon, *Anglo-Saxon poetry*, p. 68.
  17. Gordon, *Anglo-Saxon poetry*, p. 81; Whitelock, *English historical documents*, nos. 211, 212 (pp. 870, 872).
  18. See lines 69, 484, 628, 638, 776, 838, 1053, 1067. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, *Widsith, Beowulf, Finnsburgh, Waldere, Deor, done into common English, etc.* (London, 1921).
  19. Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. 3, p. 38.
  20. D. C. Douglas and G. W. Greenaway (eds.), *English historical documents II. 1049-1189* (London, 1968), no. 175 (p. 820).
  21. Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. 3, p. 36.
  22. Henceforth, these sokemen were to be subject to Westminster Abbey: H. W. Crowson, 'Selborne notes', *British Bee Journal*, 97(4207), (1969), 306-7.
  23. M. Richards (transl.), *The Laws of Hywel Dda (The Book of Blegywyrdd)* (Liverpool, 1954), p. 72.
  24. H. M. Ransome, *The sacred bee in ancient times and folklore* (London, 1937), p. 197.
  25. International Bee Research Association, *British bee books: a bibliography 1500-1976* (London, 1979), p. 25.
  26. Richards, *The Laws of Hywel Dda*, p. 40.
  27. Fraser, *History of beekeeping*, p. 17; Crane, *The world history of beekeeping*, pp. 600-1.
  28. Whitelock, *English historical documents*, no. 139 (p. 606).
  29. See Appendix I, document 4.
  30. J. Dummelow, *The Wax Chandlers of London* (London, 1973), p. 10.
  31. See Appendix I, document 5.
  32. Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 173, quoted by Whitelock, *English historical documents*, no. 33 (p. 411).
  33. B. Thorpe (ed.), *Ancient laws and institutes of England. I. Secular Laws* (London, 1840), p. 445.
  34. By Fraser, *History of beekeeping*, p. 16; see Appendix I, document 6.
  35. Douglas and Greenaway, *English historical documents II*, no. 174 (pp. 817-18).
  36. See Appendix I, documents 7 and 8.
  37. BL MS Cott. Aug. II. 92, quoted by J. M. Kemble, *Codex diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, Vol. 1 (London, 1839, reprinted for English Historical Society, 1964), no. 231 (p. 299).
  38. Letchworth Museum, *Signposts to the past* (undated leaflet). The sester (*sextarium*) was a measure of volume, of uncertain and probably variable size. See R. E. Zupko, *Dictionary of weights and measures from Anglo-Saxon times to the nineteenth century* (Madison, WI, USA, 1968), p. 155.
  39. The document, from Wells, Somerset, is mentioned in Crowson, 'Selborne notes', 306-7.
  40. For the Berkeley document, see W. Herrod-Hempsall, *Bee-keeping new and old described with pen and camera*, vol. 2 (London, 1937), p. 1796. For the Cerne document, see Crowson, 'Selborne notes', 306-7.
  41. Herrod-Hempsall, *Bee-keeping new and old*, vol. 2, pp. 1773-5; H. M. Fraser, 'Essex bees in the Domesday Book', *Yearbook of Essex Beekeepers' Association* (1953), 13-15; Fraser, *History of beekeeping*, pp. 18-21.
  42. H. C. Darby (ed.), *The Domesday geography of eastern England* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 146, 203, 258, and idem, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 277-9.
  43. E. G. Burtt, unpublished notes (1920s); Fraser, 'Essex bees in the Domesday Book'.
  44. Darby, *The Domesday geography of eastern England*, pp. 146, 258.
  45. Fraser, 'Essex bees in the Domesday Book'.
  46. The size recommended for skeps by most authors writing in England between 1587 and 1890 was between 16 and 32 litres, whereas a modern hive is likely to have a volume of 60 litres or more in summer: E. Crane, *The archaeology of beekeeping* (London, 1983), p. 142; idem, *Bees and beekeeping: science, practice and world resources* (London, 1990), p. 127.
  47. Fraser, *History of beekeeping*, p. 20.
  48. E. Legros, *Sur les types de ruches en Gaule romane et leurs noms* (Liège, 1969), pp. 3-8, 44-57; L. Armbruster, 'Ueber germanische, besonders nordische Imkerei. B. Angelsächsisches als Urkunde, Spiegelbild und Zeitmass', *Archiv für Bienenkunde*, 21 (1/3), (1940), 87-145 (at p.100).
  49. J. Morris (gen. ed.), *Domesday Book, Supplementary Vol. 35. Boldon Book* (Chichester, 1982), p. 34.
  50. Darby equates Sutreworde with Southbrook: H. C. Darby, *The Domesday geography of south-west England* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 251.
  51. Zupko, *Dictionary of weights and measures*, p. 155.
  52. H. C. Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 326.
  53. Fraser, *History of beekeeping*, pp. 17, 21.
  54. P. Walker and E. Crane, 'English beekeeping from local records after the Norman period', article in preparation for *The Local Historian*.

## APPENDIX 1

**Documentary evidence for early English beekeeping: some sources cited in the article, excluding Domesday Book**

A translation of the original document has been consulted where possible, but a few entries are from a secondary source. We should greatly value details of further relevant records. References are listed in the order in which they are cited in the main text.

### Hives, beekeepers and beekeeping

#### 1. c. 705, Wessex: hives

*tuguria gracillimis contexta viminibus seu cavitis consuta corticibus*: they live in little/simple huts elegantly constructed from osiers [wicker] or from bark stitched together to make a hollow.

J. A. Giles, *Patres Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (Oxford, 1844), quoted by L. Armbruster, 'Ueber germanische, besonders nordische Imkerei. B. Angelsächsisches als Urkunde, Spiegelbild und Zeitmass', *Archiv für Bienenkunde*, 21 (1/3), (1940), 87-145 (at p. 99).

#### 2. *Ceo est hosebonderie*, ?early 13th century, anon.: beekeeping practices and yields

E chescune rouche de eez deit respoundre de ij rouches par an de lur issue lun parmy lautre kar acoune ne rent nule & acoune iij or iij par an. E en acon lu lur doune lom a manger rien de tot le iuer e en acon lu lur doune lom. E la ou hom lur doune a manger si pount il pestre viij rouches tot le iuer de i galon de miel par an. E si vos nel quillez fors en ij aunz si aueret ij galons de miel de chescune rouche.

And each hive of bees ought to yield for two hives a-year, one with another, for some yield nothing, and others three or four a-year, and in some places they are given nothing to eat all winter, and in some they are fed then, and where they are fed you can feed eight hives all winter with a gallon of honey; and if you only collect the honey every two years, you should have two gallons of honey from each hive.

E. Lamond (transcriber, transl.), *Walter of Henley's husbandry together with [other works]* (London, 1890), pp. 80-1.

A 1932 thesis on Anglo-Norman agriculture in the 1200s included a French translation of this passage: F. de Clermont-Tonnerre, 'Histoire technique de l'agriculture anglo-normande au XIIIe siècle' (unpub. thesis, École nationale des Chartes, Paris, 1932), pp. 220-1.

### Honey, beeswax and the use of bee products

#### 3. 500s, Yorkshire: mead

Men went to Catraeth, keen was their company,  
They were fed on fresh mead, and it proved poison.  
Men went to Catraeth with the dawn.  
Their fine spirit shortened their lives,  
Mead they drank, yellow, sweet and ensnaring.

Translation of Welsh poem 'Y Gododdin' by Aneirin, transl. A. Conran, *Penguin book of Welsh verse* (London, 1967).

#### 4. 871-99, Wessex: beeswax candles for measuring time

The king 'commanded his chaplain to supply wax in sufficient quantity, and he caused it to be weighed in such a manner that when there was so much of it as would equal the weight of seventy-two pence, he caused the chaplain to make six candles thereof, each of equal length, so that each candle might have twelve divisions marked across it'.

Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, Chapter 104: see D. Whitelock (ed.), *English historical documents c. 500-1042* (London, 2nd edn., 1979), no. 7 (p. 302n); T. D. Fosbrook, *Encyclopaedia of antiquities*,



quoted by T. W. Cowan, *Wax craft* (London, 1908), p. 33; R. Büll, *Vom Wachs. Hoehster Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Wachse*, vol. I (8/1) (Frankfurt a. M., 1965), p. 640.

### 5. *Constitutio domus regis*, c. 1135: beeswax candles for royal household

<i>Official</i>	<i>Size of wax candle</i>	<i>Pieces of candle</i>
Chancellor	fat	40
Master of the writing office		
at first	fat	12
later (for Robert 'of the Seal')	small	24
Chaplain	2 on Wed., 2 on Sat. size unspecified	30
Steward, also Master-butler, Master-chamberlain, Treasurer, Master-marshal (John):		
if living out	fat	40
if living in	size unspecified	-
Clerk of the issue of bread and wine	small	24
Master-dispensers of bread and wine, of larder, of butlery:		
if living out	small	24
if living in	size unspecified	-
Deputy-dispenser:		
if living out	fat	20
if living in	size unspecified	-
Deputy-dispenser of the butlery	small	24
Keeper of the wine-butts	no candle	12
Chamberlain of the exchequer (William Mauduit)	fat	12
Chamberlain on duty	small	24
Constable:		
William, son of Odo	size unspecified	24
Henry 'de la Pomerai' and Roger 'd'Oilly':		
if living out	small	24
if living in	at discretion	-
Marshal:		
if living out	no candle	12
if living in	size unspecified	-
Usher, if a knight living in	no candle	8
Watchman	4 unspecified	-

D. C. Douglas and G. W. Greenaway (eds.), *English historical documents II. 1049-1189* (London, 1968), no. 30 (pp. 422-7).

### The value of beekeeping to the crown, or to the lord of the manor

#### 6. *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum*, c. 1000-50: the rights and duties of the bee churl (*beo ceorle*)

This document is part of a collection of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, dated to about 1125-30 by Liebermann, which belonged to St Paul's in London. Fraser dated the document to c. 1000, but Douglas and Greenaway to within the next 50 years. An inaccurate Latin translation was made in the 1100s. The following translation of the bee churl's duties was made by F. S. Scott, University of Sheffield, in 1958:

If he has a taxable stock of bees, [he] is to give (as rent) from it whatever is the custom of the area. With us it is the custom for him to pay 5 sesters of honey as rent. In some areas a greater rent is required. Moreover at certain times of the year he is to be employed on various duties at his lord's pleasure, particularly boon-ploughing, boon-reaping and mowing. And if he has good land he is to have a horse which he may provide for the lord's service or else lead himself, whichever is ordered. And [he is to do] various similar duties as is fitting. I am not able to enumerate them all. When he meets with death, his lord is to take charge of what he leaves, except for any freehold property that may be amongst it.

A few lines later, the document states: 'A slave swine-herd and a slave bee-keeper after death are liable to the same law', and 'On some estates a boor must pay tribute in honey, on some in food, and on some in ale.'

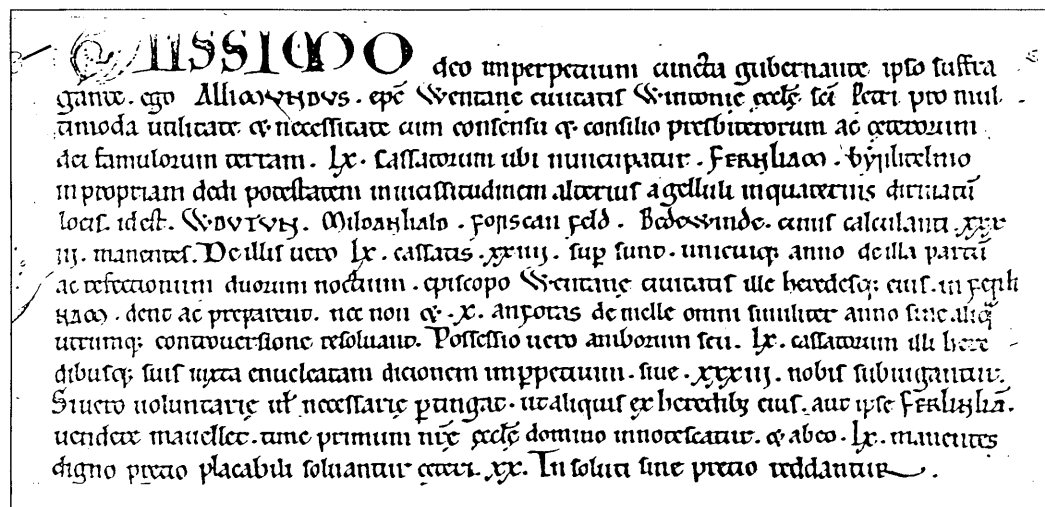
Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 383, pp. 98-9; F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle a.S., 1898-1916); M. R. James, *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912), pp. 230-1; Fraser, *History of beekeeping*, p. 16; Douglas and Greenaway, *English historical documents*, no. 172 (pp. 813, 815, 814).

### 7. Laws of King Ine, 688-94, Wessex: rents in honey

70.1 As a food-rent from 10 hides: 10 vats of honey, 300 loaves, 12 'ambers' of Welsh ale, 30 of clear ale, 2 full-grown cows, or 10 wethers, 10 geese, 20 hens, 10 cheeses, an 'amber' full of butter, 5 salmon, 20 pounds of fodder and 100 eels.

Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 173, quoted by Whitelock, *English historical documents*, no. 32, (p. 406).

### 8. 802-805, Surrey: rents in honey



**ASSISSIO** deo imperpetuum cuncta gubernante ipso iustitia  
 ganxe. ego Althelmus . episcopus Wentane civitatis Winconie ecclesie sancti Petri pro mul-  
 timoda utilitate et necessitate cum consensu et consilio presbiterorum ac clericorum  
 dei famulorum certam . lx . Cassatorum ubi nuncupatur . Feahlyha . Byrhtelmio  
 in propriam dedi potestatem inuicissitudinem aliorum agellum in quatuordecim denariis  
 loci id est . Wovry . Mibayhala . Fopscan feld . Bedosinde . annis calculata . xxx  
 iii . manentes . De illis vero . lx . cassatis . xxiii . sup . sumo . unicuique anno de illa parati  
 ac refectorium duorum nocturnum . episcopo Wentane civitatis ille heredesq . eius . in festi-  
 uis . deno ac preparati . nec non et . x . anforas de melle omni similitur anno sine aliq .  
 utrumq . conductio sine resolutione . Possessio vero amborum seu . lx . cassatorum illi here-  
 ditibusq . suis iuxta enucleatam ditionem imperpetuum . sine . xxiii . nobis subingantur .  
 Si vero voluntarie ut necessitate pingar . ut aliquis ex hereditibus eius . aut ipse Feahlyha .  
 uendere mauerit . tunc primum nec ecclesie domino innotescatur . et ab eo . lx . manentes  
 digno pretio placabili solvantur . ceteri . xx . In soluta sine pretio reddantur .

In return for land at Fernham [Farnham], Byrhtelm and his heirs shall provide 'for each year for the Bishop of the City of Winchester provisions and refreshment for two nights and also let them pay every year likewise ten jars of honey without any dispute on either side.'

Translation of charter of a grant by ALHMUND, Bishop of Winchester (802-805) to BYRHTELM. H.W. Crowson, 'Selborne notes', *British Bee Journal*, 97 (4207), (1967), 306-7.

## APPENDIX 2

**Documentary evidence for early English beekeeping: records in Domesday Book of annual honey payments and of hives and beekeeping**

Entries are based on translations edited by Morris (Phillimore edition, 1970–86). They contain the part relevant to honey payments, hives and beekeeping, together with a few unusual items. Entries for Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk record the number of hives (*vasa apum* or *rusca*) at individual places, and this information is included after the honey payments; two entries for the same place-name may refer to different places, or to different landowners.

£ is used for money whether the entry uses pounds or lb.; *s.* = shillings; *d.* = pence; [money] indicates various payments, of specified or unspecified amounts. *Sextarium* (English sester) was a measure of volume, of uncertain and probably variable size (see p. 139 above and ref. 51).

**Bedfordshire**

*Houghton Regis (Hovstone)*

£10 by wt + ½ day[‘s provisions] to the King’s revenue in wheat, honey and other things.

*Leighton Buzzard (Lestone)*

£22 by wt (silver) + ½ day[‘s provisions] to the King’s revenue in wheat, honey and other things which belong to the revenue.

*Luton (Loitone)*

£30 by weight + ½ day[‘s provisions] in wheat, honey, and other customary dues which belong to the King’s revenue.

**Cambridgeshire**

*Chesterton (Cestretone)*

It pays [money] for honey, corn, malt and other customary dues; before 1066 it paid £15 at face value and, in proportion to this, as much customary dues as was needed.

*Cheveley (Chavelai)*

It pays [money] for honey, corn and malt. Before 1066 it paid £15 at face value.

*Fordham (Fordeham)*

It pays [money] for honey, corn and malt; before 1066 it paid £10 at face value and 3 days’ revenue in honey, corn and malt.

*Haslingfield (Haslingefeld)*

It pays [money] for honey, corn, malt and other customary dues; before 1066 it paid £10 at face value, and in proportion to this, as much corn, malt and honey as was needed.

*Histon*

Before 1066 a vassal (Wulfwin) of the abbot of Ely held part of this land and rendered 1 sester of honey a year. Also (*Inquisitio Eliensis*): ‘Wulfwin the mead-keeper of Ely Abbey; he was the official (*medarius*) in charge of Ely Abbey’s mead supplies, which presumably explains his ability to pay a rent of honey.’ (J. Morris (gen. ed.), *Domesday Book. Vol. 18 Cambridgeshire* (Chichester, 1981), editorial note 3,5.)

*Isleham (Gisleham)*

It pays [money] for honey, corn, malt and other small customary dues.

*Soham (Saham)*

It pays [money] for corn, malt, honey and other small customary dues. In 1066 it paid £25 at face value, and three days’ revenue in corn, honey, malt and everything else. King Edward always had this manor in demesne.

*Wilbraham (Wilborgham)*

It pays [money] for honey, corn and malt. Before 1066 it paid £14 at face value.

**Derbyshire**

*Darley Dale (Dereleie)*

In 1066 it paid £2 and 2 sesters of honey, now £4.

*Five manors: Darley (Darleie), Matlock Bridge (Mestesforde), Wirksworth (Werchesuorde), Ashbourn (Esseburne), Parwich (Pevrewic)* with their outliers

They paid in 1066 £32 and 6½ sesters of honey; now £40 of pure silver.

*Hope (Hope)*, with outliers Edale (Aidele), Aston (Estune), Shatton (Scetune)

In 1066 they paid £30, 5 sesters of honey and 5 wagon-loads of lead sheets; now they pay £10. 6s. 0d.

## Devon

*Sutreworde* (see above, p.139, and reference 50)

Five beekeepers (*mellitarii*) in Ansgar's manor rendered yearly 7 sesters of honey; the 5 swineherds rendered 61 swine.

## Dorset

*Holworth (Holverde)*

Value £3 and a sester of honey.

*Rushton (Ristone)*

It pays 4 sesters of honey.

## Essex

*Colchester (Colesestra)*

£4 was paid before 1066; now £80 and 4 sesters of honey or 40s. 4d.

*Places where the number of hives recorded* (numbers in brackets refer to 1066)

Amberden (Hall) (5) 1, Ardleigh 3, Arkesden 2, Ashdon (10) 3, Barking 10, Berden 1, Borley 2, Boxted 1, Broxton 2, Chardwell 3, Clavering (12) 5, Coggeshall 4, Colne 3, Cuton 5, Debden (6) 3, Dunmow 4, East Ham 3, East Mersea 1, Elmstead (5) 2, Fairstead 3, Farnham 3, Fordham (10) 6, Foulton (0) 2, Frating 6, Fryerning 2, Fyfield 1, Goldingham (Hall) 5, (Great) Braxted 4, (Great) Canfield (3) 3, (Great) Easton 4, (Great) Easton 3, Great Hallingbury 3, (Great) Henny (3), (Great) Maplestead 2, Great Waltham 20, Great Warley 1, Halstead 2, Harlow 2, Harlow 5, Hawkwell 2, Hawkwell (0) 2, (Helions) Bumpstead 3, (Helions) Bumpstead (3) 5, Henham (16) 10, Heybridge 3, Heydon (13) 10, (High) Easter (10) 17, Higham (Hill) 2, Hockley 4, Hockley 6, Horseham (Hall) 3, Housham (Hall) 3, Hunt's Hall 2, Hutton 4, Ingrave 3, Lamarsh 6, Langham (3) 0, Layer (4) 4, Layer (de la Haye) 6, Leaden Roding 1, Lindsell 5, Liston 8, (Little) Bardfield 2, (Little) Bromley 2, Littlebury 3, Little Dunmow 8, (Little) Easton 2, (Little) Hallingbury 7, Little Parndon (3), Little Sampford (3) 1, Little Wakering 1, (Marks) Tey (2), Markshall 3, Matching (6) 6, Moze 3, Mundon 4, Navestock 4, The Naze 4, (North) Weald (Bassett) 5, Notley 10, Pentlow (8) 8, Prested (2) 2, Prittlewell 9, Quendon (4) 17, Radwinter (1) 4, Radwinter 4, Rainham 12, Ramsden 2, Ramsden (Downham) 2, Ramsey 8, Rivenhall 2, Roding 8, Saffron Walden (4) 30, St Osyth (6), Shalford 5, Sheering 3, Shellow (Bowells) 1, Shortgrove (23) 11, South Ockendon 1, Springfield 1, Stambourne 4, Stanstead (Hall) (10) 8, Stapleford Tawney 2, Stebbing (5), (Steeple) Bumpstead 4, Stevington (End) (2) 1, Strethall 2, Sturmer (3) 3, Sutton (6), Takeley 5, Tendring 3, Thaxted (10) 16, Theydon (2) 6, Theydon (Bois) 12, Thorpe(hall) 4, Thunderley (Hall) (5) 5, Thundersley (2) 2, Tilbury (6), Tolleshunt 8, Tolleshunt Major (2) 0, Udecheshale (3) 3, Ugley (2) 2, Ulting 2, (Wakes) Colne 3, Walter Hall 2, Weeley (5) 2, Wickford (2) 3, Wickham St Paul's 2, Willingale (Doe) 5, Wimbish (4) 4, Witham 3, Wix (7) 10, Woodham (Walter) 13, Wormingford 7, Wrabness 5, Yardley (1) 3.

## Gloucestershire

*Bisley (Biseleie)*

23 men pay 44s. and 2 sesters of honey.

*Manor in Cirencester (Cirecestre) Hundred*

Before 1066 it rendered [money and other dues] and 6½ sesters of honey, and 3000 loaves for dogs.

*Deerhurst (Derheste)*

Before 1066 the manor gave in revenue £41 and 8 sesters of honey by the King's measure. [Now money only.]

*Gloucester (Glowecestre)*

Before 1066 it paid [money and other dues] and 12 sesters of honey according to the measure of that Borough.

*Villages in Wales*

In Wales, under Waswic the reeve there are 13 villages ... These pay 47 sesters of honey, 40 pigs, 30 cows and 28s. for hawks. Walter the Gunner pays 1 sester of honey and 1 pig for one waste land. Alfred of 'Spain' has 7 villages; these pay 6 sesters of honey, 6 pigs and 10s.

**Hampshire***Broughton (Brestone)*

Of this manor, the reeve has in Wallope (Wallop) 5 villages, etc. He once had in his revenue the honey and pasture of this manor and woodland for building houses. Now the foresters have this and the reeves nothing. The honey and pasture in the King's forest are worth 10s. each.

*Eling (Edlinges)*—held by the King

In the Forest certain dwellings, land and animals were appropriated; also 3 sesters of honey, all of which are now missing.

**Herefordshire***Alwington (Alwintune)*

12 villages with 9 ploughs pay 20 blooms [bars] of iron and 8 sesters of honey.

*Archenfield (Arcenefelde)*

By custom 96 King's men pay 41 sesters of honey.

If anyone has concealed a sester of honey from the customary due and this is proved, he pays 5 (sesters) for 1 sester, if he holds as much land as ought to produce them.

*Birch (Mainmarre)*

It pays 6 sesters of honey and 10s.; 1 Welshman pays 5s. and 2 sesters of honey.

*Caerleon (Carlion)*

2 smallholders with  $\frac{1}{2}$  plough pay 4 sesters of honey.

*Cadle (Cape)*

Five Welshmen with 5 ploughs pay 5 sesters of honey and [money].

*Cleeve (Clive)*

[Welshmen who] have 8 ploughs pay 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  sesters of honey and 6s. 5d.

*Ewyas (Ewias) Harold*

9 Welshmen with 6 ploughs pay 7 sesters of honey.

*Ewyas (Ewias) Harold castlery*

[There are] 4 Welshmen who pay 2 sesters of honey; they have 1 plough. There are also 3 churches, a priest and 32 acres of land; they pay 2 sesters of honey.

*Ewyas (Ewias) Longtown*

From this land Roger de Lacey has 15 sesters of honey.

*Garway (Lagademar)*

4 free men with 4 ploughs ... pay 4 sesters of honey. The forest pays  $\frac{1}{2}$  a sester of honey.

*Hill (Hulla)*

12 villagers and 12 smallholders with 11 ploughs pay 18 sesters of honey.

*Kilpeck (Chipeeete)*

Ploughmen and men with ploughs pay 15 sesters of honey and [money].

*Leominster (Leofminstre)*

In 1066 8 vassals paid 3 sesters of honey. Now they pay £3. 5s. 0d. on account of honey.

The riding men gave 14s. 4d. and 3 sesters of honey. [Men who plough and sow ...] give in customary dues [money] and 65s. from honey. Before 1066 one holding paid 11s. 10d. and 2 sesters of honey.

*Linton (Lintune)*

Ibert the Sheriff has in his revenues of Archenfield all the customary dues of honey and sheep which belonged to the manor before 1066. William son of Norman has from it 6 sesters of honey, 6 sheep with lambs and 12*d*.

*Monmouth Castle (Castello Monemude)*

There are Welshmen there who have 24 ploughs; they pay 33 sesters of honey and 2*s*.

*Penebecdoc (Penebecdoc)*

This land pays 6 sesters of honey and 10*s*.

*Strangford (Etone)*

2 men who have 2 ploughs pay 2 sesters of honey.

*Suckley (Suchelie)*

The King holds Suckley. In lordship ... a keeper of beehives (*custos apium xii vasculos*).

*Westwoode (Westrode)*

There is 1 Welshman who has  $\frac{1}{2}$  plough and pays 2 sesters of honey.

### Huntingdonshire

(*Inquisitio Eliensis*: J. Morris (gen. ed.), *Domesday Book. Vol. 19. Huntingdonshire* (Chichester, 1975), editorial note 4,4)

*Spaldwick*

Now the abbot of Ely has there ... 4 beehives ...

### Kent

*Langport (Lanport)*

[Editorial note] Villagers and smallholders who dwell outside the City [of Canterbury] pay [money] and 1 sester of honey.

### Leicestershire

*Leicester (Ledecestre)*

In 1066 it paid [money] and 15 sesters of honey. Now all is commuted.

### Norfolk

*Blakeney (Snitterley)*

Before 1066 the value was [money] and 1 night's honey.

*Breckles (Breccles)*

Before 1066 it paid  $\frac{1}{2}$  a day's honey, and the customary honey dues; now £20 by weight.

*Buckenham (Buchan)*

Value of the whole, before 1066, £61. 13*s*. 4*d*. and 2 sesters of honey, later and in 1086 [money].

*Folsham (Foulsham)*

Value before 1066 [money] and 13 sesters of honey; in 1086 [money], and £11. 10*s*. 0*d*. blanced for the honey.

*Hingham (Himcham)*

Value of whole before 1066 and in 1086 3 sesters of honey and [money].

*Holt (Holt)*

Value before 1066 £20, 1 night's honey and [money]; now [money].

*Kenninghall (Kenehala)*

Value of the whole before 1066 £10 and 5 sesters of honey; later £26; now [money].

*Larling (Lurling)*

[Editorial note]: '1 freeman, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  caracutes [hides] of land. [?Church of] St Etheldreda had the full jurisdiction over him, and of annual customary due he paid 2 sesters of honey before 1066.'

*Norwich (Norwic)*

Before 1066 [money] and 6 sesters of honey, 1 bear and 6 dogs for bear [baiting]; in 1086 [money] and 1 goshawk.

*Saham Toney*

Before 1066 it paid £12 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  a day's honey, and the customary dues.

*Thetford (Tetford)*

Before 1066 [money] and 4 sesters of honey and 10 goat skins and 4 ox hides.

*Thorpe St Andrew (T(h)orp)*

Value before 1066 £12 and 1 sester of honey and 2,000 herrings; later and now £30 blanched.

*Wighton (Wistune)*

Before 1066 [money] and 6½ sesters of honey; now £23 by weight.

*Places where the number of hives was recorded* (numbers in brackets refer to 1066)

Acle 15, Alington 4, Barney 2, Billingford 4, (Blo) Norton 6, Boyland 3, Brettenham 5, Briningham 5, Broome 2, Bylaugh 3, Calthorpe (7) 2, Cawston 5, Cley 1, Cranwich 7, Dunham 3, Edgefield (1) 2, Elsing 12, Feltwell 17, Foxley (5) 7, Framingham 4, Framingham 6, Fulmodeston 1, (Great) Melton 3, (Great) Melton 2, Great Walsingham (9) 5, Grensvill St B(enedict) 1, Griston 10, Guton (14), Hackford 5, Hamworth (7) 8, Harling 1, Haverlingland 20, Hethel (2), Hethersett 7, Hickling 2, Hilborough 5, Hindolveston 2, Hindringham 6, Hingham 2, Hockham 2, Horsford 15, Horstead 1, Hudeston 1, Hunstanton 3, Kerdiston 2, Langford 2, Letheringsett 2, Lexham 4, Loddon 2, Lopham 10, Ludham 3, Marsham 6, Methwold 27, Narborough 3, Narford 5, Panworth 3, Pensthorpe 4, Pentney 7, Pulham 4, Raynham (2), Rushall (3) 1, Scottow 3, Shouldham 3, Shropham 3, Snarehill 5, Snetterton 2, Somerton 2, South Erpingham 6, Sparham 10, Stinton 3, Stody 3, Stoke 1, Stow (Bardolph) (2) 14, Sutton 4, Tharston 1, Thelveton 1, Thorpe 8, Thorpe 1, Thurketeliart 5, Tittleshall 4, Walcott 4, Walsingham (6) 2, Walsingham 2, Wheatacre (6), Whissonsett 7, Whitwell (6) 12, Wicklewood 4 owned by freemen, Witchingham 4, Wormegay (4) 2.

**Northamptonshire***Greens Norton (Nortone)*

Includes land and woodland ..., when stocked, value 60s. when it bore mast and honey 4s.

**Nottinghamshire***Arnold (Ernehale)*

Value before 1066 £4 and 2 sesters of honey; now £8 and 6 sesters of honey.

*Dunham (Duneham)*

In 1066 it paid £30 and 6 sesters of honey; now £20 with everything that belongs there.

**Oxfordshire***Oxford (Oxeneford) Borough*

Before 1066 it paid [money and] 6 sesters of honey for tolls, tribute and all other customary dues.

*Oxford (Oxeneford) County*

Pays [money for a hawk, packhorse and other things, and] 6 sesters of honey.

**Shropshire***Stokesay (Stoches)*

In lordship there were [many items] and a miller and a beekeeper (*custos apium*) at a mill. Value before 1066 £10.

**Suffolk***Blythburgh (Blideburc)*

Before 1066 it paid £30 at face value and 1 day[’s supply] of honey; now money.

*Diss (Dice)*

Value before 1066 £15 ... and ½ day[’s supply] of honey and customary dues; now £30 by wt.

*Ipswich (Gepeswiz)*

Before 1066 it paid £15 and 6 sesters of honey, and 4s. for the customary honey dues and 8s. to the prebendaries.

*Places where the number of hives was recorded* (numbers in brackets refer to 1066)

Acton (9) 7, Assington (14) 6, Badingham 1, Bradley 1, Brandeston 3, Campsey Ash 3, Chevington 3, Clare 12, Clopton 3, Cockfield 12, Cookley 2, Cretingham 4, Dennington (5) 5, Depden 3, Depden 13, Desning 9, Framlingham 3, Framlingham 5, Freckenham 6, Fritton 3, Frostenden 2, (Great) Ashfield 10, (Great) Barton 2, Grundisburgh 3, Helmingham 2, Henham 4, Hitcham 2, Hopton 3, Horham 2, Horham 1, Hundon 17, Huntingfield 6, Kedington 6, Kenton 3, Kenton 3, Kersey 3, Lavenham (5) 6, Leiston 7, Letheringham 5, (Long) Melford 12, Lound 2, Marlesford 3, Martlesham (6) 12, Moulton 4, Mutford 2, Newton (16) 9, Nowton 3, Otley 6, Pakenham 8, Playford (6) 1, Rattlesden 2, Rushford 4, Shadingfield 2, Sibton 5, Staverton 4, Stutton 2, Syleham 1, Tannington 3, Thelnetham 3, Thistleton 5, Thorington 4, Thorington 4, Thurston 6, Wangford 2, Wangford 5, Westhorpe 5, Westleton 2, Weybread 4, Whittingham 1, Wingfield 2, Withersfield 6, Witnesham 7, Wixoe 5, Worlingworth 6, Wrating 6, Wrentham 5.

### Sussex

*Burbeach (Beddinges)*

It pays 2 sesters of honey.

*Wappingthorne (Wapingetorne)*

It pays 1 sester of honey.

### Warwickshire

*Warwick (Warwic)*

Before 1066 the Sherifffdom with the Borough paid £65 and 36 sesters of honey, or £24. 8s. 0d. for all that belonged to the honey. Now they pay [money and other things, and] 24 sesters of honey with the larger measure and the Borough 6 sesters of honey, that is a sester at 15d. Of these the Earl of Meulan has 6 sesters and 5s.

### Wiltshire

*Bradford-on-Avon (Bradeford)*

This has 36 villagers, 40 smallholders, 22 pigmen and 33 burgesses who pay 35s. 9d.; 1 servant (*serviens*) who pays 7 sesters of honey.

*Salisbury (Sarister)*

Edward the Sheriff receives [various foods, including 100 cheeses] and 16 sesters of honey or, instead of honey, 16s.

*Westbury (Westberie)*

Queen Edith held it. ... 38 villagers, 23 smallholders and 9 beekeepers (*ix mellitarij*).

### Worcestershire

*Bredon (Breodun)*

This has woodland 2 leagues long and 1½ leagues wide. The Bishop has from it 10s. and whatever comes from it in honey and hunting and other things.

*Cleeve Prior (Clive) and Atch Lench (Atchelenz)*

The Church holds these, where there are a mill which pays 1 sester of honey...

*Fladbury (Fledeberie)*

The Bishop has whatever comes from woodland (2 leagues long and ½ wide) in hunting and in honey and in timber for the salt-houses of Droitwich and 4s.

*Pershore (Lands of Persore)*

Before 1066 it paid £83 and 50 sesters of honey, with all pleas of freemen.

*Powick (Poiwic)*

It pays 3 sesters of honey and 45 pence.

*Ripple (Rippel)*

Before 1066 it was held by the Bishop, who 'had honey and hunting and whatever came' from woodland ½ league long and 3 furlongs wide in Malferna (Malvern) Chase, and 10s. in addition. 'Now it is in the Forest. The Bishop receives from it pasture dues, fire-wood and [timber] for repairing houses.'

*Suckley*, see Herefordshire.



*Wolverley (Ulwardalei)*

The Church holds it. There is 1 free man who has 1 hide [of land] and pays 2 sesters of honey.

*Witley (Witlege)*

Before 1066 Arnwin the priest held it, paying to the Church all the customary revenue dues and 1 sester of honey.

EVA CRANE was formerly Director of the International Bee Research Association. Her main research interests are the science and history of bees, beekeeping and bee products. Her latest publication is *The World history of Beekeeping and honey hunting* (London, 1999).

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## **The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting by Eva Crane**

*(Duckworth £86)*

This is the first book to explore in detail the world history of man's use of bees from prehistoric times to the present day.

Both rock art and recent field studies show how honey hunters obtained their harvest from bees' nests: honey - the chief prize - also beeswax and bee brood; mead could be made from the honey.

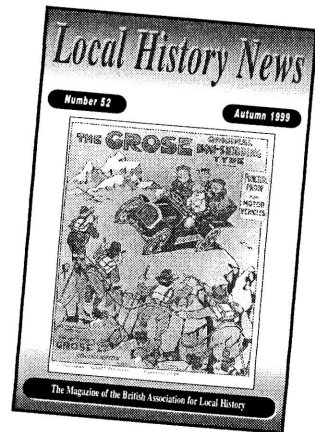
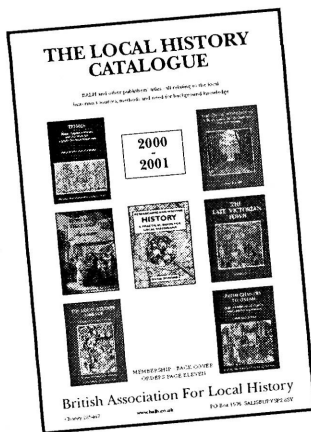
The book draws on recent archaeological evidence about bee hives used in Ancient Egypt, Greece, Crete and pre-Roman Spain, and also in Mesoamerica by Maya people who kept stingless bees. From the evidence presented, Dr Crane is able to work out routes by which the use of hives may have been transmitted from one area to another within the Mediterranean region, and in northern Europe, eastern and western Asia, Africa and the Americas.

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