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English Beekeeping from c. 1200 to 1850: evidence from Local Records

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Among all the Creatures which our bountifull God hath made for the use and service of man in respect of great profit with smal cost, of their ubiquitie ... and of their continuall labour and comly order, the Bees are the most to be admired.

For first with the provision of a Hive and some little care and attendance, which need be no hindrance to other businesse, but rather a delightful recreation amid the same; they bring in a store of sweet delicates, most holesome both for meat and medicine.

These lines open Chapter I in the Reverend Charles Butler's important beekeeping book published in 1609.¹ The 'care and attendance' given to bees changed little during the Norman period, as we stressed in a previous article,² and even up to the nineteenth century. The earliest hives (skeps) of woven wicker (Figure 1) were gradually replaced



1. Wicker skeps depicted in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (Bern, 1545).



2. Skeps in two hive recesses in a wall (copyright Jenny Bidgood, 1992).

by those of coiled-straw (Figures 2 and 3). From the late sixteenth century a number of books printed in England gave beekeepers advice on managing their bees, but very little has been written about ways in which beekeeping impinged on the everyday life of people during past centuries. This article presents information on this important subject found in local records.

We received many extracts from unpublished sources in response to a letter published in 1986, asking if anyone working on the records (for their own purposes) had seen mentions of bees, honey or beeswax. These extracts are quoted in the Appendix, under county. We found other records published in diverse books and articles. The total of over 400 items examined in this study (Table 1) constitutes a substantial collection of data, especially for the period 1550–1740. Nearly all counties of England are represented, some by numerous records, as is the case with Derbyshire, Hampshire and Yorkshire, and a few by only two or three items. No local records were obtained for Northumberland or for the Isle of Man, and the few from Berkshire and Wiltshire were included in a discussion of offences related to beekeeping.³

The large number of inventories, in particular, enrich our picture of past beekeeping—they show the number of hives held and by whom, and the value of a hive of bees. Wills and other documents illustrate how bees were passed from one person to another, and how much beeswax was given to the Church. The results of surveys made by local historians in different areas allowed us to calculate how frequently bees and

Table 1: Categories of local records surveyed

	No. individual records	No. counties represented	Date range
Inventories	263	22	1400–1742
Wills	58	18	1505–1806
Account books	29	16	1248–1849
Rental books	6	3	1237–1496
Diaries/memorandum books	4	3	1641–1760
Cartularies	3	2	1260–1460
Court records*	3	2	1399–1500s
Other	40	20	1278–1847
Total	406	35	1237–1849

*Others were discussed by Walker, 'Offences and punishments' (see ref. 3).

bee-related items were mentioned in a total of over 16,000 inventories and wills (Table 5). In addition, some local records show that honey and beeswax were used for payments of tithes and rents, and others give prices of these products. Tolls and customs dues were levied on honey and wax, but these are beyond the scope of this article.

Outside the period when inventories were drawn up for probate and other purposes (from the early sixteenth century to the mid-eighteenth century), the number of records relating to bees and beekeeping is smaller, but they are more varied. The few items cited from household and estate accounts and from memorandum books suggest that searches of such documents may provide further details. Readers working on these records may well find mentions of bees, hives, honey or wax, and the authors of this article would be grateful for details of the wording and source of each reference.

In addition to the written records listed in Table 1, much evidence about beekeeping in England during the period has recently been obtained from about 880 structures of stone, brick or cob built to house skeps of bees, especially in wet and windy areas. They date from c.1200 to c.1900, but most are from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Few contemporary references to the structures are known, but extensive written and photographic records have been compiled during the last 50 years.⁴ Figure 2 shows an example of wall recesses for hives.

Voluntary transfers of hives of bees, and of honey and beeswax

Purchases and sales

A beekeeper wanting to buy bees would probably get them locally, and many examples of Devonshire yeomen buying and selling 'butts' (hives) of bees were found in records from Elizabethan and early Stuart times.⁵ In his 1593 book, Edmund Southerne said some people believed—although he did not—that bees should not be bought or sold for money but should be exchanged for wheat, otherwise they would not prosper.⁶

Samuel Bower, incumbent of Sprotborough near Doncaster, Yorkshire, noted in his memorandum book that in 1640 he bought bees 'at Cantley for 30s. + a mett of wheat'.⁷ But in certain places it was a common belief that bees prospered only if gold was paid for them; one Sussex gentleman paid one guinea for two hives of bees in 1733.⁸

Some beekeepers made their own skeps, but others would have bought them. The numbers purchased by Oriel College and Sion College in Oxford were recorded for each of seven years between 1472 and 1532, a total of 63.⁹ Thomas Turner of Ticehurst, Sussex, noted in his diary the purchase of one dozen hives in February 1760 and 15 in January 1761 from 'Tho. Burfield ... of Steyning, supplier of beehives'.¹⁰ In Cumberland, the *Carlisle Journal* of 11 December 1813 contained a death notice for Thomas Modlin, aged 77, 'beehive manufacturer and bee merchant of Talkin Tarn', and an old beekeeper near Penrith recalled that until about 1900 his grandfather 'in the winter months ... would take about four or five cwt. of rye straw to Joseph Turner, straw hive skep-maker, at Catterlen'.¹¹ Figure 3 shows a Cornish skep-maker. Gypsies in the New Forest—who were permitted to sell only things they had made from plants growing wild—made skeps from 'bennets' (sedge), then took them to market 'in sticks of six, bound round with a single band of green briar',¹² and they also hawked the skeps



3. Mr Hambly, a Cornish skep-maker, 1952 (photographer unknown).

round Hampshire, Dorset and Wiltshire.¹³ Skep-making may also have been a fairly common occupation in the Norwich area, for the fifteenth-century guild pageants included 'skeppers', that is skep-makers, with the skimmers, glovers, wax chandlers and others.¹⁴

All honey and beeswax prices in the records mentioned in this section are included in Table 3. The earliest information found on money sales and purchases is provided by the *Comptus de Crundal* (Account Roll of Crondal Manor, Hampshire) for 1248, which recorded that 49½ stoups of honey (probably almost 250 gallons) were sold for £6. 13s. 1½d., and also six gallons for 4s.¹⁵ In the same county the Beaulieu Abbey account book for 1269–70 contained entries for sales of honey by the blacksmith (three galones), the tanner and the wool store (two galones each), and Otterwood Grange. The abbey itself sold over half a ton.¹⁶ Accounts kept by churchwardens in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, record the sale of two gallons of honey and various purchases of wax in the 1430s (see below, p.13).¹⁷

Most small sales would have been made locally. An Essex charcoal burner sold two gallons of honey to his landlord in the mid-sixteenth century,¹⁸ and in 1571 Robert Pattison, a Carlisle merchant with nine hives of bees in his garden, had three gallons of honey 'in stock', presumably to sell.¹⁹ Gilbert White of Selborne, Hampshire, wrote of a honey trader coming to the village on 4 October 1783

This day has been at Selborne the honey market, for a person from Chert [*sic*] came over with a cart to whom all the villagers round about brought their hives, and sold the contents. This year has proved a good one for the Upland bee gardens, but not to those near the forest. Combs were sold last year at 3½d per pound. This year from 3¾ to 4d.²⁰

Churt is about eight miles from Selborne.

Purchases of beeswax were included in the accounts of certain large households, for example that of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster; in one year (1313–14) it bought 1,714lb. of wax for seals as well as 1,870 lb. of wax lights called perchers.²¹ The Paston family of Norfolk purchased wax lights from John Orford, a London wax chandler, whose bill (1466) reads: 'for xii torches and one candell of 1lb. lvs iid ob [halfpenny]'.²² Professor Dyer, who studied household accounts of the fifteenth century, also found that some large households such as that of Richard Mitford, Bishop of Salisbury, obtained many goods including spices and wax from London.²³ On the other hand Kings College, Cambridge, bought at least some of its wax locally. Although fairs were in decline in the later Middle Ages, Stourbridge Fair on the outskirts of Cambridge remained important, and many households in eastern England obtained various goods there, including wax.²⁴ The detailed household accounts kept by Sarah Fell of Swarthmoor Hall in Westmorland included prices paid in 1675–6 for bee hives and wax.²⁵ The family bought and sold goods at the local markets of Ulverston and Dalton as well as further afield, for example in Lancaster and Preston.²⁶ Cottagers in Kent sometimes sold honey and wax from their bees to get money for their rent.²⁷

Bequests and other gifts to individuals

Hives of bees were included in the personal bequests of 55 wills surveyed. A 1605 will found in an old oak chest at Holdenhurst Parish Church, Hampshire, is fairly typical. John Howkie, a husbandman, left to Joan his wife and John his son, 'my garden of hyves ... they shall have the benefit and increase of the said garden between them'. He bequeathed hives kept in three further places to two other sons and a daughter.²⁸

Figure 4 shows part of a will, which includes a section referring to bees:

Item. I Give and bequeath to my brother William one Shillings
to my brothers Williams wife a Stocke of Bees
& to Sarah Mary Darchus & Deborah his Daughters Each of them
a Stock of Bees.
My Sister Sarah a Stock of Bees and 20s.
John Pressey a Shilling his wife a Stock of Bees
and his three Children Each of them a Stock of Bees
John Chapman & Thomas Each of them a Stocke of Bees.

William Clerk of St. Albans bequeathed a total of seven 'hyves of beyn' and two 'hony pottes' to seven different people (1525; see Appendix).²⁹

Bees received by a widow as part of her husband's residuary estate would not necessarily be mentioned in his will. However, among the wills with specific bequests of bees, ten stated the number of hives a wife was to receive; John Gowers of Little Baddow, Essex, left to his wife two 'skepes of Bees which were her fathers'.³⁰ Most beneficiaries were members of the family, and Table 2 shows how frequently various relations were mentioned; daughters were the most common legatees. For example, in 1611 Richard Dyer, a Bedfordshire labourer, left each of his three daughters a hive of bees.³¹ Only two wills mentioned grandchildren; in one, dating from 1670, Rose Sibley of Hexton, Hertfordshire, gave to her grandchildren Joseph, Jeremy and Rose, 'each of them One Stock of Bees immediately after my decease. And the rest of my Bees I give unto my daughter Anna Woodward for hir life and after her decease To be divided equally amongst hir Children'.³² The children—and some of the other people—named in the wills would probably not look after the bees bequeathed to them, but they would receive the honey and wax from them, or the income from sales. There is one record of a gift of bees as a dowry: Charles Butler, whose 1609 book is quoted above, gave some bees to his daughter at birth, and by the time she married they amounted to a £400 portion.³³

In some wills bees were given to friends, or to servants. An Essex yeoman (1584) left six of his ten hives to his maidservant,³⁴ and John Parishe of Limpsfield, Surrey, willed to 'Maid Anne Meddurste, one stock of bees standing next to the gate, being a straw hive' (1605).³⁵

Table 2: Family members receiving bequests of bees in 35 wills

No. wills with bequests to	
daughter(s)	15
son(s)	12
wife	10
brother(s)	4
sister	3
godchild	2
grandchildren	2
nephews/nieces	1

1720 A 102

In the name of God I Thomas Sumner of Over Wallop in the County of Southampton Shoemaker being weak in body do make & ordain this my last will and testament in manner following first I recommend my soul into the hands of God who gave it. & broadly I commit my body to the earth to be decently buried at y^e Discretion of my Exors^r — two after named & as touching all Temporall things & estate of God shall Possesse me with. I give and bequeath thereof as followeth.

I give and bequeath to my Brother William one shillings
to my Brothers Williams wife a Stock of Bees
& to Sarah Moray Barchoy & Deborah his Daughters Each of them
a Stock of Bees.

My Sister Sarah a Stock of Bees and 20.

John Proffoy a ~~Stock~~ shilling his wife a Stock of Bees
and his three Children Each of them a Stock of Bees

John Chapman & Thomas Each of them a Stock of Bees

and forty shillings I give to the poor of Over Wallop to
be distributed to the poor widows by the Overseers of the poor
of the sd Parish And all the rest of my Goods and Chattells

whosoever I give & bequeath to my loving wife & her heirs all
my money otherwise than what I have disposed off & do make
& ordain her to be my Exors^r to this my last will & Testament
In witness whereof I have subscribed my hand & seal y^e 30th day

of June Anno Domini 1706

Witnessed by
Thomas Cummings
Samuell Nobb

Thomas Sumner



5. Devon beekeeper showing the contents of her skep (photographer unknown).

Bequests and other gifts to the Church

In 1278 Roger Jeycors, a ship's master—who kept bees at his home in Suffolk—fashioned an anchor from 20 lb. of beeswax, and offered it in person at Bury St. Edmunds Abbey as thanksgiving for being saved from a storm when he was sailing to the Faroes.³⁶ Until the Reformation the Church received many gifts of beeswax, which was mostly used for candles and other lights. A candle weighing 21 lb. (cost 13s. 5d.) was given to Holy Trinity church in Norwich in 1376, and offerings to the priory at Lynn, also in Norfolk, included beeswax weighing the same as the donor, as well as wax tapers whose length equalled the person's height.³⁷ Margaret Skyers of Skyers Hall near Barnsley, Yorkshire, left 4 lb. of wax to be burnt at her burial in 1392.³⁸

Three known wills included bequests of wax; for example, in 1454 John Russhey left 100 lb. for 'the sustenation of the light of the torchys' in the church of Fressingfield, Suffolk.³⁹ Instead of wax, some people bequeathed hives of bees to provide the wax, or money for wax or lights. In 1407 Henry Castilayn left all his bees to the churchwardens of Bexley, Kent, 'the profit of them to be devoted towards maintaining three wax tapers in the church, ever burning.'⁴⁰ A century later a widow in Bilborough, Yorkshire, left her bees for 'keeping up a light in the chapel ... as long as it shall please God to preserve them'.⁴¹ According to W. E. Tate, 'church hives were farmed out on bond to reputable parishioners'.⁴² In two wills a hive of bees was given to a vicar; in one dating from 1505, Robert Inkepenne left five hives to his wife and '*unum stallum de apibus*' [one hive of bees] to the vicar of Middleton, Hampshire.⁴³

Both secular and religious guilds were established in many medieval communities, and their duties included arranging memorial services for deceased members and lighting candles in their memory. *The Oak Book of Southampton* (1249) mentioned the burning of four wax candles, each weighing two pounds, during the vigil and mass.⁴⁴ In two 1529 wills, a widow in Huntingdonshire bequeathed ‘a be heyffe’ to Our Lady Guild of Old Weston,⁴⁵ and a man in Culmstock, Devon, gave to ‘the store of St John a swarm of bees—the which now resteth in John Morse’s keeping at the Half Moon’.⁴⁶

Andover Compton church in Hampshire was ‘endowed with 8*d.* by the year as modus for 2 lb. wax’ in 1291.⁴⁷ And in Norwich between the mid-fourteenth and the late fifteenth century, citizens of every will-making category left more money for financing memorial masses and other prayers for the dead than for any other purpose apart from family bequests.⁴⁸ Other examples from Carlisle and Appleby are quoted by Bouch and Jones.⁴⁹

In July 1215, when King John spent three days at Bridgnorth, Shropshire, 300 lb. of wax had to be sent there for his use, and candles were lit before the sacred relics that he brought with him.⁵⁰ After the Reformation, churches used much less beeswax, but candles became important again during the short reign of Catholic Queen Mary (1553–58). A gigantic Paschal candle weighing some 300 lb. was set up in 1558 at the newly restored shrine of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey. Even after Mary’s death, many beeswax candles were used at some funerals.⁵¹

Another type of gift involving wax is illustrated by the wills of two Buckinghamshire men who gave 20 and 12 lb. wax to Great Hampden Church in 1552, with the instruction that it should be sold and the money ‘distributyd among the pore people’.⁵²

Obligatory transfers of hives of bees, and of honey and beeswax

Payments of rent in honey were a feature of English manorial life up to the end of the Norman period,⁵³ and they continued in later centuries. Beeswax was also used for paying some tithes and rents, and also for fines.⁵⁴ These payments in kind were, however, gradually commuted to money payments.

Tithes

Tithe payments with hives of bees were probably not very common during the period covered in this article.⁵⁵ The only example found was in a tithe case heard in the King’s Court in 1606, where it was stated that in Yateley, Hampshire, anyone with seven to ten hives of bees paid one hive to the rector, and this had been ‘the custom and manner of tithing’ in the parish ‘from time out of memory of man’.⁵⁶ At Child’s Wickham in Worcestershire (1304), bees and honey were among 15 items to be tithed,⁵⁷ but the tithe was probably paid in honey or beeswax. According to Jacob, honey and beeswax were titheable ‘by the tenth measure and tenth pound’;⁵⁸ it was recorded in Hertfordshire in 1587 that ‘The Tenants and Parishoners of Flamstead ... make an agreement with the Parson, of offerings and tythes to be paid ... for honey, wax, ...’.⁵⁹ At Sherburne in Harfordleyth (near Pickering, Yorkshire, 1582) the ‘yierlie tythes and profitts of the Vicaridge’ included honey, hay, geese and pigs, all valued,⁶⁰ and in a case in the Court of Star Chamber a Cornish yeoman said that he paid eight gallons of honey as his tithe to the prebendary.⁶¹

In one place in Lancashire honey tithes continued until 1847,⁶² but in most places they were commuted to money much earlier. In the Yateley tithe case mentioned above, it was reported that beekeepers with only one to seven hives traditionally paid a tithe of 1*d.* for each hive (1606).⁶³ During the early eighteenth century in the Yorkshire villages

of South and North Cave, every skep of bees was tithed at a rate of two or three pence per annum, or in honey,⁶⁴ and at Hampsthwaite near Harrogate the rate was one penny per 'swarm' (compared with 1½*d.* for a cow with calf);⁶⁵ at Laxton, Nottinghamshire, the rate was also 1*d.*⁶⁵ The rector of Sefton, Lancashire, took 1*d.* on every cow 'for its milk' and ½*d.* on every 'swarm ... for its honey'.⁶⁷ From 1792 to 1804 John Dent of Romalldkirk, then in Yorkshire, noted the annual tithes paid to the rector for one to four swarms per year, the amount rising from 1*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per swarm; his garden wall had a large alcove where he kept his hives of bees.⁶⁸

In Cornwall, tithes were apparently levied on at least 14 'bee-gardens'—places where hives were kept—until the early nineteenth century.⁶⁹

Rents

Six records from the late 1200s refer to the payment of rent in wax, usually to the Church. In Staffordshire the nuns of Polsworth agreed to bring 3 lb. wax to the church at Manceter,⁷⁰ and a cartulary of Otterton Priory, Devon, for 1260 said that a tenant called de Penne paid one pound of wax annually; also, when the prior or abbot of Otterton visited Sidmouth, de Penne had to provide, among other things, 'a wax candle to read by'.⁷¹ The only bee-related record found for the Isle of Wight for this period is of a man who paid rent of a pound of wax and a pound of cumin on Michaelmas day, c. 1260.⁷²

The abbot of Chertsey in Surrey received some rents in wax and some in honey, for example 6 lb. wax (and 10*s.*) from the vicar of Chobham and 12 gallons of honey from Geoffrey de Bagshot (1254).⁷³ Baigent published the detailed accounts from 1237 for the manor of Crondal, Hampshire, which was part of the estates of St. Swithun's Priory in Winchester. Among rents paid to the manor by tenants, many of the payments for larger plots (more than 15 acres) included honey, amounts varying from one to 23½ stoups. For instance Thomas Cach and Jordan le Turnour, who held 29½ acres in Yateley, had to provide 'one stoup of honey containing 5 gallons'; this was about 70 lb. of honey. The total amount paid to the Crondal manor was large: 63 stoups, or probably about 4,400 lb.⁷⁴ It is likely that the honey came mainly from heather, which was common in the area.

A cartulary of St. Peter's Abbey, Gloucester (c. 1266), lists honey rents from several manors, some of which are referred to as 'honeylands'. For example, at Churchehame (Churcham) three men with a total of 20 acres paid 32 kegs of honey on St. John's Day (24 June) or at Michaelmas.⁷⁵ Accounts kept in the 1450s by the bursar of Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, show that several people paid rents for land in beeswax of, for example, 4 lb. per year,⁷⁶ and the Bursar's rent book for Durham Cathedral Priory (1495–6) includes three entries for rents paid in wax or honey.⁷⁷

Values of hives of bees, and of honey and beeswax

Various local records of the sale or purchase of bees or their products include prices; a few court records also give the values of stolen goods.⁷⁸ Inventories provide an important set of figures for values of hives of bees, with the proviso that inventory values for all goods can be variable, and wide discrepancies may be found, even within one area.⁷⁹ The value of a hive of bees in Oxfordshire inventories (1549–90) ranged from 12*d.* to 60*d.*, with no relation between value and year.⁸⁰ Also assessors often undervalued livestock and other articles, as Marshall found in Cumbria.⁸¹

Table 3 sets out values found in local records for hives of bees, empty hives, honey and beeswax. Figures for the composite unit of consumables (CUC) are included, and also men's wages and prices of some other animals, where found in the records used. The values of bees and their products, which come from many counties, would have been affected by conditions in different areas and in different years. In 1712, Joseph Warder of Croydon, Surrey, said that a hive of bees was worth 10 shillings in his area, five shillings in some parts of the country and only half a crown in others (120*d.*, 60*d.*, and 30*d.*).⁸²

Only a few records contain values for two or more items in the same year, and Table 3 shows these values in bold type. A useful document, probably from Yorkshire (1608), states that 'by common estimacion of men, ... a swarme of Bees was and is worth vii s., a gallon of honny [14 lb.] vi s. viii *d.*, a pounce of wax x *d.*, a chicken iii *d.*, a cocke of haie ii *d.*'.⁸³ Two hundred years later, values in a Bedford court case were: empty hive 6*d.*, stock (hive) of bees 5s., honey and beeswax each 10*d.*/lb.⁸⁴

Most of the values given for new hives are prices paid to a skep-maker, and they indicate that a skep cost about a tenth as much as a skep full of bees. Over half the inventories gave values for hives containing bees, and from 1550 to 1725 the value increased about 2.5-fold, reflecting—roughly—the increase in CUC.

The value of honey was mentioned in only a few inventories, but the prices found in some local records of sales and purchases (see above, pp.5-7) are included in Table 3. In the earlier part of the period under study, the CUC increased gradually,⁸⁵ as did the price of honey, but from the eighteenth century honey prices increased more slowly than the CUC. Sugar was perhaps 40 times as expensive as honey in 1250, and still five times as expensive in 1600, and honey would probably have been widely used as a sweetener until sugar became cheaper than honey.⁸⁶

Honey was sometimes listed with other items, and the total value was stated. An inquest report (Shrewsbury, 1306) said that Walter, servant of John de Cardigan of Carnaruan [Caernarfon], 'drove before him a horse laden with xxv flagons of honey in a leathern sack'. After Walter and the horse were drowned in the River Severn, the honey, sack, saddle and skin of the horse were valued at 10s. 6*d.*⁸⁷ One inventory from Killamarsh in Derbyshire included '3 potes of honey, a wax cake (& 12 Kushinges) 12s.',⁸⁸ and that of a gentleman in Huish, Devon, included 'Wett larder: Butter, Hony, Morde, Seame, Tallow, & Suite £2 10s.' and 'Grotts, flower & Beese £1 13s 4*d.*'.⁸⁹ A 1675 inventory from Writtle, Essex, valued an unstated amount of honey at 5s., which was 1.4 per cent of the total estate.⁹⁰

Table 3 also gives beeswax prices found in local records between the 1260s and 1809; the price was always higher than the price of honey, but increased much less over the centuries. When Queen Isabella (mother of Edward III, d. 1358) was at Castle Rising, Norfolk, 103 quarters and 11 lb. of wax were bought, costing £4. 16s. 1½*d.*, so the price was 0.4*d.* per pound.⁹¹ Churchwardens in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, recorded in their accounts that they bought wax for 5*d.*/lb. in the 1430s and 6½*d.* in 1440, but 9*d.* in 1439.⁹² Perhaps there was a shortage, for there were raging winds and rain in that year, according to Harrison,⁹³ and wheat was sold at ¾*d.* per bushel, a high price for the period. In 1477-9 the churchwardens of St. Paul's, London, bought 92 lb. of new wax for lights at 4½*d.*/lb., and Roger Middleton, a wax chandler, was paid ½*d.*/lb. for making various lights and candles by combining this wax with old wax.⁹⁴

Table 3: Values of hives of bees, empty hives, honey and beeswax found in local records from various English counties

All values are in old pence (*d.*). Values for the same year from the same source are in bold type.

Final column: CUC = composite unit of consumables; values from L. Munby, *How much is that worth?* (2nd. edn., British Association for Local History, 1996).

Year	Hive	Bees + hive	1 lb. bees- wax	1 lb. honey	1 lb. sugar	Farm and other values	<u>CUC</u> 100
1203-6		12					-
1248				0.57		labourer paid 4 <i>d.</i> /day wheat 3-8 <i>d.</i> /bushel	-
1250				0.43	19		-
1260s			6			salt 3 <i>s.</i> 5 <i>d.</i> /bushel	-
1269-70	½?		4-6	0.54- 0.7			0.8
1287				0.4			0.9
1289-90			5				0.8
1291			4				1.1
1349			12				1.0
1350				0.57	20		1.0
1390		12	5½				1.1
1399				0.43			1.1
1410				1.2	24		1.3
1428			1.5/ quart				1.0
1430s			5	1.1			0.9-1.4
1439			9			wheat 3 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i> /bushel	1.5
1439			4.5			labourer 4 <i>d.</i> /day	1.5
1440			6.5				1.4
1445			4.8				0.9
1460				1.1	14.3		1.0
1472	2						1.0
1477-9			4.5				1.2
1480				1.2	8.7		1.0
1479-90			5.5-6				0.9-1.6
1487	3		7-8				0.9
1515	3.5						1.1
1525			8				1.3
1521	4						1.7
1527	5						1.5
1529	10?						1.6
1530				1.6	6.8		1.7
1532	4.5						1.8
1534-6			6-7				1.5
1538		10	4				1.4
1541		12					1.7
1547		19.5					2.3
1550	1	24*(12)				horse 13 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i> 5 sheep 8 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	2.6
c.1550				2.3		12 pigeons 18 <i>d.</i> goose 5 <i>d.</i>	3.1
1571		27		1.7		1560: horse 30 <i>s.</i>	2.7
1573		10					2.7
1575		33*(7)		3.4	18	1577: duck 3½ <i>d.</i>	3.1
1593	5	60				craftsman 12 <i>d.</i> /day labourer 8 <i>d.</i> /day	3.6

Table 3 *Continued*

Year	Hive	Bees + hive	1 lb. bees- wax	1 lb. honey	1 lb. sugar	Farm and other values	<u>CUC</u> 100
1600		40*(16)				1605: labourer 8 <i>d.</i> /day	4.6
1608		40	6?	2.3	13	chicken 3 <i>d.</i>	5.1
1608			10	5.7	20	1609: 7 sheep 50 <i>s.</i> , 2 pigs 30 <i>s.</i> , man 6 <i>d.</i> /day	5.1
1613					11-36		5.5
1616				5.1		man 6 <i>d.</i> /day	5.6
1620	2						5.3
1624					5½-20**		5.4
1625		60*(15)					5.3
1632					14-17**		6.1
1641			10			1639: man 10 <i>d.</i> /day	5.9
1643					14-16		5.5
1650		54*(13)				1660: wheat 52 <i>s.</i> /quarter	8.4
1669					10-22**		5.7
1670		30					5.8
1675-6	2.5-3	57*(31)	12			1672: one sheep 12 <i>d.</i> 1658-1700: labourer 14 <i>d.</i> /day	6.5
1694-5				13	5½-26**	1688: flitch of bacon 60 <i>d.</i>	6.9
1698	7						7.7
1700		57*(4)			4½-20**	wheat 41 <i>s.</i> /quarter	6.7
1705					10		5.5
1712		30-120					6.4
1719				3.4	5		6.1
1725		94*(4)				1738: pig <£1	6.1
1733		126					5.4
1750				3.8?	6	1742: horse £1, cow £4	5.9
1752					3½-14**		6.0
1760	7.5					1754: wool 6 <i>d.</i> /lb	6.4
1761	7						6.1
1767			c.12				7.9
1776			18		7		8.0
1783				3.8.4			8.7
1785				5			8.4
1787				2			8.3
1788				8			8.7
c.1800				6	9-10	1795: butter 9 <i>d.</i> /lb.	15.7
c.1809	6	60	10	10			16.2
1810				8			16.7
1818				6			15.3
1850				15	4		9.7
1858				15-25			11.9
1890-5				8.5	1.8		9.7

* Average for the following quarter century, calculated from the number of records in brackets.

** Price range for different qualities; values from various sources quoted by B. Trinder and J. Cox, *Probate inventories for Dawley, Lilleshall, Wellington and Wrockwardine 1660-1750* (Chichester, 1980), p. 42.

Ownership of hives of bees

Households that kept bees

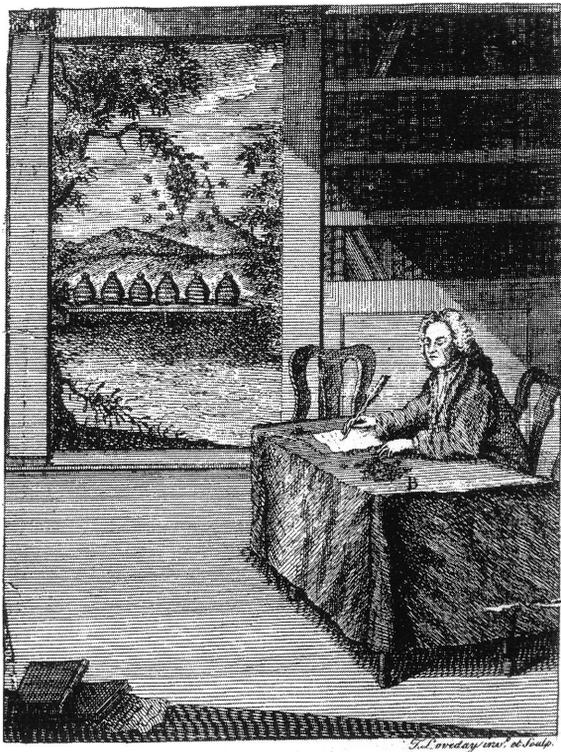
A monastery was likely to own many hives of bees to provide beeswax for candles; the honey produced would be used for food, medicines and mead. Vernon published interesting details for Beaulieu Abbey, Hampshire;⁹⁵ in 1269–70 it had 25 apiaries in different places, containing possibly 300 hives in all. In the north-west of England, Furness Abbey also had a number of granges where bees were probably kept.⁹⁶

A survey by Bramhill of inventories from one part of Derbyshire for the period 1583–1691 indicated that bees ‘were largely kept by the more well-to-do members of society’,⁹⁷ and the same conclusion was drawn by Trinder and Cox when comparing inventories from the Telford and Bristol areas.⁹⁸ In the early thirteenth century Lord Berkeley had ‘a great store of honey and wax’ from his farms in Gloucestershire.⁹⁹

Wills and inventories were rare among the poorest people, and we have only a few for cottagers and labourers. Studies by local historians revealed that inventories were made for only about 15 per cent of adults in Standon, Staffordshire (1547–1730),¹⁰⁰ and for nine per cent in Powick, Worcestershire (1676–1775); the poorest and most numerous sector of the population was not represented in this source.¹⁰¹ In Washingborough, Lincolnshire (1566–1680), inventories were made for less than 50 per cent of those who died,¹⁰² and in Long Sutton, Hampshire, wills were left by about 25 per cent of adult males (1561–1727).¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Table 4, which is based on the inventories we have surveyed, shows that people in different social classes had bees. Other evidence, particularly the building of wall recesses for skeps in the gardens of many quite modest houses, suggests that it was not uncommon for a cottager to keep a few hives of bees.¹⁰⁴ Boys reported for Kent that there were ‘few bees in the county’, and most of these were kept by small farmers and cottagers.¹⁰⁵

From her work on Derbyshire records, Hopkinson suggests that cottagers might have shared hives, and our records show that hives of bees—like other livestock—were sometimes jointly owned.¹⁰⁶ In the 47 inventories from Long Sutton, Hampshire, that included livestock, one yeoman (1605) had two shared ‘stalls’ of bees, and another man (1613) owned ‘part of a cow and calf’ and ‘part of 3 horses’.¹⁰⁷ A few years later the will of Thomas Squire, a ‘labourer, sick in body’, gave to his two brothers ‘a Swarme of Bees to be divided betwixt them’ (Marton, Lincolnshire, 1625),¹⁰⁸ and at least 13 other wills and inventories indicate joint ownership. Joint owners probably shared the honey and wax they harvested. One of the most complicated holdings was that of John Rogers, linen webster of Killamarsh, Derbyshire, whose 1662 inventory included ‘1 hive of beese 6s., half a hive of beese 3s. 4d., 3 partes of a hive of beese 3s., half of 3 hives of beese 15s.’¹⁰⁹ And in Timperley, Cheshire, Yewen Wright, husbandman, had two hives of his own and shared at least 15 with seven people living at different places up to about 15 miles away.¹¹⁰ Payor says that these hives were described as ‘buttie’ (butty), a term used in the mines when work was let out to a gang of men who shared the proceeds.¹¹¹ An inventory of a weaver in Killamarsh (1624) noted that he had ‘one hive let for 3 years to James Bolamley’;¹¹² it is not known whether the proceeds were shared or went entirely to the lessee.

The wills and inventories show that it was not uncommon for women to own bees. About 13 per cent of inventories and 20 per cent of wills that include bees are those of widows and spinsters, and many bequests of hives of bees were to women (see Table 2). Table 4 indicates that women owned rather few hives on average. Samuel Bower’s memorandum book (1641–7), in which he recorded swarms from various hives, among other matters, makes it clear that some of the bees were his wife’s.¹¹³



6. The Reverend John Thorley in his study, with a view of skeps on a bench outside the door (Plate 4 in his book *Melissologia*, 1744).

Yorkshire, gave detailed instructions for harvesting honey, done by a man and two women.¹¹⁸

Skeps of bees required rather little attention, so a beekeeper did not need much equipment, and local records rarely mention it. However, the inventory of a Hampshire yeoman included a 'honey brake' which was probably used for breaking up the honey combs when straining honey.¹¹⁹ 'A bee bench' and 'stools or checks' were listed in a Staffordshire inventory¹²⁰ and a Hampshire will¹²¹ respectively; these were used as skep stands. Another Hampshire man who had nine bee hives also left a candle mould, so he may have made candles from his own beeswax,¹²² and a Sussex inventory included two stalls of bees and some bottles of mead.¹²³

Number of hives per household, and the proportion of households with them

In the local records discussed here, which are mainly from the period 1530–1740, hives of bees were mentioned in inventories of individuals who would have been heads of households. In the majority of those that included bees, the number of hives was stated; almost 60 per cent of the owners had only one, two or three, and the average was five and a half. Figure 6 shows that the Revd. John Thorley, a Presbyterian clergyman of Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, had at least six skeps. Table 4 is based on inventories of people whose occupations we know; the average holding did not vary much among the higher social classes, but women, craftsmen and labourers generally had fewer hives. The largest holding recorded was '29 stockes of bees' in the 1587 inventory of John Cooper, husbandman of Bampton, Oxfordshire, and another man in the same county had 23 hives.¹²⁴ Holdings of 27, 26 and 20 hives were recorded in Hampshire, a good beekeeping area; Alice Danyell (widow of an Andover miller) was an unusual woman in

In larger households, a servant or a gardener probably attended to the bee hives; Lisle referred to the gardener caring for the bees at Shotsbroke, Hampshire.¹¹⁴ The situation may have been different in more modest country households, in that some of the beekeeping books (written by men) in and after the late sixteenth century seem to assume that a wife looked after the bees.¹¹⁵ For instance, in Yorkshire William Lawson's *The country housewife's garden* (1618) dealt 'with the Husbandry of bees, published with secrets very necessary for every Housewife'.¹¹⁶ According to Laycock, on a typical Devon farm the farmer's wife would keep some hives: 'In one corner of the kitchen-garden the good *Dame* grows her choice 'arbs: Sage, Mint, ... Bergamot. While near by will be found her row of *bee-butts* [straw skeps], each in a ... *bee-hole* [bee bole or wall recess, see Figures 2 and 7], or standing out in the open'¹¹⁷ (see Figures 5 and 6). Henry Best, a seventeenth-century farmer of Elmswell in the East Riding of

Table 4: Inventories for different social classes: average number of hives of bees, and their value as a percentage of the total estate

Numbers of inventories are in brackets

	Av. number of hives	Av. value of hives as % of total estate
Gentleman	4.7 (12)	0.5% (8)
Parson, physician, etc.	5.4 (5)	1.2% (2)
Yeoman	5.4 (27)	0.7% (12)
Husbandman	4.6 (27)	1.2% (14)
Craftsman	2.9 (14)	1.2% (3)
Labourer	2.3 (4)	5.1% (2)
Spinster, widow*	2.9 (25)	0.9% (10)

* The number of hives in the inventory of Alice Danyell, widow, is so exceptional (see text) that it is not included here.

that she had '27 beestalls' at her death in 1562, valued at 40s., over a fifth of her total estate.¹²⁵ Twenty hives of bees were included in an inventory from Loughborough, Leicestershire,¹²⁶ and 21 and 19 in two from Dorset.¹²⁷

The number of hives bequeathed in a will may well have been less than the total owned, the rest being included in the residue of the estate. The average number in 32 wills was four, and the minimum was one. The Hampshire widow mentioned above bequeathed at least 23 hives of bees to at least 18 individuals, as well as three to the Church.¹²⁸ The will in Figure 4 refers to 12 hives, and three Essex wills contain similar numbers.¹²⁹

Records of the wall recesses for hives (see above, p.5, and Figures 2 and 7) show that the number at a property ranged from one to 46, and averages for individual English counties were between four and seven.¹³⁰



7. Nine of the 13 recesses in a garden wall at South Milford, N. Yorkshire, used for skeps of bees until 1933 (IBRA Register No. 760; photo: R. G. Wilby, 1973).

Table 4 shows the average value of hives in an inventory as a proportion of the total estate. In the late seventeenth century, Richard Minshull Esq. of Bourton, Buckinghamshire, left 'seven stocks of Bees £1 0s. 0d.' which constituted 0.2 per cent of his whole estate, and the five stocks belonging to Thomas Charlett of Great Brickhill, Doctor of Physic, represented 0.3 per cent of the total value of his estate of £436.¹³¹ But sometimes fewer hives represented a bigger proportion of the total valuation; a feltmaker of Winterbourne, Gloucestershire, had four hives of bees valued in 1681 at 16s. 2d., 1.5 per cent of his total estate.¹³² The three hives of bees left by Richard Bayly, a Shropshire gardener, made up three per cent of his estate, valued at £32 9s. 2d.¹³³

One of the many inventories showing the value of bees in relation to other livestock is that of Francis Sibley (1648), a wealthy maltster and yeoman of Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire, whose estate was valued at £269 18s. 3d. and included 'in the Yarde and Backside 6 hives of bees £3 0s. 0d.', that was one per cent of the total; his other livestock was valued at £19. 0s. 6d. (seven per cent), and his wearing apparel at £7. 0s. 0d. (two per cent).¹³⁴

Contemporary agricultural surveys made little, if any, reference to beekeeping. In 1586 Harrison reported for England generally that 'there is such plentie of [bees] in maner everie where, that in some uplandish townes there are one hundred, or two hundred hives of them ...'.¹³⁵ Two centuries later Bailey and Culley said that in Cumberland bees were 'found through every part of the county and in some situations are very profitable', and bees were also 'common' in Westmorland.¹³⁶ Bumstead, who studied wills and inventories in the Bedale area of North Yorkshire for the period 1539–1720, concluded that there was 'an almost universal spread of households keeping a cow for milk, a pig for bacon, a few hens and perhaps a hive of bees', or often two, three or four.¹³⁷ In Staffordshire in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries 'many farmers kept bees, sometimes on a large scale'.¹³⁸

Table 5, based on published and unpublished surveys, gives the percentages of inventories and wills that included bees. The proportions are low, and some commentators have concluded that comparatively few people kept bees. In a computer analysis of 1,527 inventories of Dorset farmers, Bettey and Wilde were surprised that only 13 per cent listed bee hives, 'mostly on the heath'. They argued that appraisers were unlikely to have ignored hives of bees since each was valued at about 10d. in 1573, increasing to 30d. in 1670. They concluded that beekeeping was 'not a particularly common sideline' in Dorset.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, 13 per cent is one of the highest percentages in Table 5. It was only two per cent for Telford inventories, and Trinder and Cox contended that appraisers did not list bees, especially in the eighteenth century, 'because they normally found none to list'.¹⁴⁰ However, Hopkinson, working on inventories from north-east Derbyshire, suggested that some appraisers did not include bees, 'which might be here today and gone tomorrow. Hives placed at some distance from housesteads might be overlooked'.¹⁴¹ Marshall, who examined over 2,000 inventories of Lakeland people in Westmorland (1661–1750), also thought that assessors often ignored both bees and poultry.¹⁴²

Table 5 shows that bees were mentioned more frequently in earlier inventories, which were generally more detailed than later ones,¹⁴³ although Telford inventories were as detailed in the eighteenth century as in the seventeenth.¹⁴⁴ Kenyon found in his survey of 112 Sussex farming inventories (1611–1776) that poultry and bees were mentioned only in the early years, up to 1690, and they might be assessed together; for example, a weaver of Winterburne had '3 stocks of beese and the poulterie £1.3s.0d.'¹⁴⁵ These items were also valued together in five late sixteenth-century Westmorland inventories.¹⁴⁶

Table 5: Number of inventories (and wills) that included hives of bees in 26 areas

County, area	Period	Total no. scanned	No. with hives	Percentage of total
Derbyshire:				
Chesterfield/Brampton ¹	1521-1603	203	13	6.4%
Killamarsh ²	1535-1750	160	12	7.5%
Dore & Totley ²	1535-1750	159	10	6%
Dorset ³	1573-1760	1527	200	13%
Essex:				
Little Baddow ⁴	1480-1715	143 **	>2	>1.4%
(Essex) ⁵	1558-1603	10,000 **	c.20	0.2%
(mid-Essex) ⁶	1635-1749	245	5	2%
Gloucestershire, mid ⁷	1539-1688	169	12	7%
ditto	1688-1790	244	0	0
Hants, Long Sutton ⁸	1502-1693	52 *	7	13.5%
ditto	1696-1856	58 **	0	0
Herts, St. Stephens, St. Albans ⁹	1540-1820	400	11	2.8%
Lancs, Pilsworth ¹⁰	1587-1691	38	3	7.9%
ditto	1703-1748	12	0	0
Leics, Loughborough ¹¹	1500s	>500	12	<2.4%
Oxfordshire ¹²	1549-1590	259	21	8.1%
Shropshire:				
Market Drayton ¹³	1530-1730	112	5	4.5%
Telford ¹⁴	1600s-1700s	846	15	1.8%
Surrey ¹⁵	1485-1608	c.1300	10	0.8%
Staffordshire:				
Standon ¹⁶	1547-1730	134 *	7	5.2%
Uttoxeter ¹⁶	1671-1760	20	0	0
Leck ¹⁶	1730-1830	27 *	0	0
Lichfield ¹⁷	1568-1680	190	7	3.7%
Rugeley ¹⁸	-	208	2	1.0%
Worcs, Powick ¹⁹	1676-1775	202	3	1.5%

*inventories and wills **wills only

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Conclusions

This article presents the first attempt to collect together and analyse inventories, wills and other local records that mention bees, honey or beeswax. Our study of 406 items from 35 English counties provides valuable information about beekeeping and hive products from the thirteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, in addition to what is available in contemporary books and pictures.

The wicker or straw skeps used as hives were bought and sold, empty or with bees in them. Hives of bees might be given or bequeathed to an individual (especially a relation) and, until the Reformation, beeswax was given to the Church for candles. Rents and tithes might be paid in honey or beeswax. The values of these hive products increased over the centuries, but less rapidly than the CUC. On the other hand sugar decreased in value, reaching parity with honey probably in the mid-nineteenth century, and then it replaced honey as the common household sweetener.

In the records studied, it was found that a household might keep between one and 29 hives, and hives were sometimes shared between two or more people. The average number of hives owned by a gentleman, yeoman or husbandman was about twice the number owned by a man from the lower ranks of society or by a woman. Only one to 14 per cent of inventories and wills scanned in different areas mentioned bees. However, we think it likely that more households kept bees than these figures might suggest; only a small proportion of people had a will or inventory drawn up, and many appraisers might have ignored bees as being unimportant in the total valuation of an estate.

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APPENDIX: EXTRACTS FROM PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED LOCAL RECORDS

Each source has been given a unique identifying code.

BEDFORDSHIRE (Bd)

Bd 1b 1809, indictment of Thomas Young, labourer, Maulden, for stealing 'two stocks of bees, value 10/-, six pounds of honey, value 5/-. One pound of bees-wax value 10d. Two straw bee hives value 1/-'.
(Bedfordshire County Records, Vol. 1. Quarter Sessions Rolls, at Bedford; from E. Briden)

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE (Bu)

Bu 1a 1552 'xx li of wax sold by John Bruer and John Bampton and distributyd amonge the pore people. ... xij li of wax sold by the personnes above named to the use of the seid pore people.'
(The Parish Registers of Great Hampden. The Edwardian Inventory of July 23rd 1552; from E. Briden)

Bu 2 **Shardeloes Estate Accounts [nr Amersham]** (from E. Briden).

Bu 2a 1694 'July 2nd 2lbs of Honey 2s. 2d.'

Bu 2b 1698 'June 22nd 4 Beehives 2s. 4d.'

CHESHIRE (Ch)

Ch 1 **Probate records for township of Timperley, etc., in parish of Bowdon, held at Cheshire County Record Office, supplemented by parish registers, etc.; all Timperley except 1b and 1f** (from H. E. Pryor, 1987).

Ch 1a 14 February 1604 John Leigh, husbandman: 'two heives of Bies 8s. 0d.'; total value of inventory £61.10.3d.

Ch 1b 14 June 1612 Robert Pedley, Ryngey (Ringway), husbandman: 'in Bees 13s. 4d.'; total £43.8.6d. His will mentions 'All my hives of Beene'.

Ch 1c 19 July 1632 Yewen Wright, husbandman: 'in Hives of Beeies 2.00.00'; total £48.13.7. His will (1 May 1632) includes: 'Now for my beeies there is three hives att Mr. Crosbies which are buttie betwixt him and me. There is likewise three hives att Mrs. Massies in Owldebarrow which are buttie. There is likewise att John Barrowes in Hale, 4 hives which are buttie. [4 further items of buttie hives] Item there is att William Trevises of Timperley two hives of my owne and part of one swarm. ...All my goods etc etc to son-in law ... and my daughter Excepting two hives of Beeies, the one whereof I give to my sister Ellen Statham ... and the other to Anne Devis.'

Ch 1d 12 Oct. 1650 James Shawe, yeoman: 'Half a swarm of bees 3s. 4d.'; total value of goods £62.2s.8d., debts £67.5s.0d.

Ch 1e 3 May 1671 Joane Milv(n)es, widow: 'Half of two hives of bees 6s. 8d.'; total £105.4s.4d.

Ch 1f 25 June 1672 William Gibbon, Baguley, yeoman: 'For Two Hives 12s. 0d.'; total £152.9s.6d.

Ch 1g 4 Jan. 1683/4 John Simpson: includes beeswax, honey and hives, valued with 'other small things'.

Ch 1h 16 Aug. 1684 Richard Houlst, husbandman: 'In Bees 15s. 0d.'; total £21.10s.10d.

Ch 1i 7 March 1722 William Coppock, tanner: '... Bees, Bee flag, ...'.

CORNWALL (Co)

Co 1 **Documents held at Cornwall Record Office, Truro** (from Mr. Hodge, 1971).

Co 1a 1614 Anne Bassett, Tilidy (Illogan parish), widow, inventory includes bees.

Co 1b 1806 John Gummow, St Enoder parish, yeoman, will includes bees and their hives.

Co 1c Tithe commutation documents (1838-43) include 15 bee-gardens in 12 parishes; largest is 'bee close' at Bolingey (1 acre 3 rods 37 perches).

CUMBERLAND (Cu)

Cu 2a 1591 Robert Pattinson, merchant, Carlisle, inventory: '3 gals honey in stock, value 6s., 9 hives in garden 20s.' (from B. C. Jones, 1990).

Cu 4a mid-1800s: 'Hives were made from rye straw, the straw being cut while in a green stage. In the winter months grandfather would take about four or five cwt. of rye straw to Joseph Turner, straw hive skep-maker, at Catterlen.'

(William Dodd, unpublished notes, c. 1985)

DERBYSHIRE (Db)

Db 1 **Inventories, Chesterfield (1a-1h) and Brampton (1i-1r)** (from M. Bramhill, 1987).

Db 1a 1629 Edmund Brocksopp, yeoman: 'in the garden, two hives 13/4'; total value £304.17.0.

Db 1b 1633 Robert Shawe, yeoman: 'bees in 3 hives 15/-'; total £640.18.6.

Db 1c 1623[?] Thomas Greaves, tanner: '½ hive of bees'.

Db 1d 1661 John Newton, gentleman: 'three stocks one swarm of bees £1.0.0'; total £423.8.6.

Db 1e 1670 John Houkfeld: 'parts of 3 hives of bees 5/-'; total £60.2.4.

Db 1f 1671 George Milnes, gentleman: '3 hives of bees £1.0.0'; total £637.10.0.

Db 1g 1679 Edward Hurst: '2 hives of bees 5/-'; total £57.7.2.

Db 1h 1685 John Shawe, confectioner: 'in shop 1 lb. honey 3/6'.

- Db 1i** 1583 Edward Stephenson, husbandman: 'hives 9/-'; total £47.10.8.
Db 1j 1601 Godfrey Whiteshawe: '2 hives of bees 12/-'; total £19.13.8.
Db 1k 1619 Robert Dakin: 'one stock of bees and a little swarme 6/8'; total £38.6.4.
Db 1l 1649 Ralph Heath, yeoman: '4 swarms or hyves £2.0.0.'; total £156.18.8.
Db 1m 1640 Peter Calton, yeoman: '4 hives 13/4'; total £235.16.0.
Db 1n 1669 John Loe, yeoman: 'bees £1.0.0.'; total £168.10.0.
Db 1o 1676 Robert Sutton, yeoman: hives of bees 6/8'; total £81.4.6.
Db 1p 1677 George Heathcote, gentleman: 'hives of bees 2/6'; total £333.12.1.
Db 1q 1685 George Barer, husbandman: 'bees 2 old stocks 1 swarm £1.0.0.'; total £89.6.6.
Db 1r 1691 William Hibbert, farmer: 'old stock and 4 swarms 15/-'; total £60.10.6.

Db 2 Inventories, Killamarsh (from A. M. Hopkinson, 1987).

- Db 2a** 1558 Rychard Bartram, husbandman: 'vi swarmes v s.'
Db 2b 1558 Nycholas Atkin, husbandman: 'iii hives (with hay) vi s.'
Db 2c 1562 John Watson, labourer: 'i hive ii s.'
Db 2d 1572 James Ashton, gentleman: 'viii hives £1'.
Db 2e 1587 William Pereson, husbandman: 'iii swarmes v s.'
Db 2f 1593 Nicholas Atkin, yeoman: 'ii hives, vi s. viii d.'
Db 2g 1617/18 John Dobbe: 'i hive v s.'
Db 2h 1624 John Bingley, weaver: '1 hive let for 3 yrs 6s. 8d.'
Db 2i 1641 Robert Sitwell, gentleman and lawyer: '4 hives £1.13.4. 3 lbs wax 2/6'.
Db 2j 1662 John Rogers, linen webster: '1 hive of beese 6s.; halfe a hive of beese 3s. 4d.; 3 partes of a hive of beese 3s.; halfe of 3 hives of beese 15s.; 3 potes of honey, a wax cake (& 12 Kushinges) 12s.'
Db 2k 1677, Richard Whitehead, husbandman: '2 stockes of bees 6/8'.
Db 2l 1680 Robert Booker, labourer: '3 hives £1'.
Db 2m 1616 Anne Ball, widow: '1 quartre of hunny 1/6'.

ESSEX (Es)

Es 3 Wills, Little Baddow, held at Essex Record Office (from S. V. Rowley, 1986).

- Es 3a** 1602 Elizabeth Hawkes: to two of her daughters 'a heive of Bees', and to another daughter 'a swarme of Bees that bee at father drivers'.
Es 3b 1621 John Gowers: to his wife two 'skepes of Bees which were her fathers'.

HAMPSHIRE (Ha)

Ha 3 Wills and inventories held at Hampshire Record Office, Winchester (from F. Younson, 1987).

- Ha 3a** 1720 Robert Howard, Beaulieu, inventory: 2 'Stocks of Bees' 8 shillings. (HRO ref. 1720 A 50/2).
Ha 3b 1721 Mary Butler, Sway, Boldre, widow, will: to her 3 sons 'one Stock of Bees each' and to another son two stocks. (1721 A 019)
Ha 3c 1718 William Godwin, Bishops Waltham, yeoman, bequeaths 'a stock of bees, beehives, and stools or checks belonging to the same'. (1718 P 22)
Ha 3d 1721 George Uffill, Kilmeston, bequeaths 'All my Stalls of Bees att Home and other places' to his wife and son and 3 daughters, to be disposed of and the value to be divided between them. (1721 P 64)

Ha 4a 1706, will of Thomas Sumnor, Over Wallop (died 1720), see Figure 4 and text.

Ha 5 Wills and inventories, Monxton, nr Andover, held at Hampshire Record Office, Winchester (from D. Coldicott, 1992).

- Ha 5a** 25 July 1605 John Skete, inventory: 26 'beestalls' £3. Also he bequeaths one 'Beestall' each to a daughter, two sons and a granddaughter, and two each to two daughters and a son. (1605 ARCH75/1-2)
Ha 5b 26 Nov. 1611 Alice Skeate, widow [of John, see Ha 5a], inventory: 'four weake beestalls', 8s. (1611 AD 78)
Ha 5c 19 June, 1618 Richard Thomas, husbandman, inventory: 'the bee folde', £5. (1618 ARCH69/1-2)
Ha 5d 1631 Edward Rawlings, inventory: '11 Stalles of Bees', £2. (1631 AD79)
Ha 5e 30 Jan. 1649 Robert Rawlings, inventory: 'item in bees', 10s. (1648 ARCH 68/1-2)
Ha 5f 23 Oct. 1682 George Baldwin, inventory: 'in the Loft over the Chamber ... some old beehives ...'. (1682 AD3)
Ha 5g 30 Dec. 1687 Dorothy Baldwin, inventory has entry similar to her husband's [Ha 5f]. (1687 ARCH 6/1-2)
Ha 5h 18 Apr. 1682 John Dodd, inventory: 'eleven Stockes of Bees', £4. (ARCH 18/1-2)
Ha 5i 1687, William Jacob, bequeaths to a niece and nephew, 'each of them a Stocke of Bees', and one to another niece. (1687 ARCH 48/1-2)

Ha 13, Ha 14 Wills and inventories, Andover, held at Hampshire Record Office, Winchester (from D. Coldicott, 2000).

- Ha 13a** 1573 John Petersson the elder, yeoman, inventory: 'a honey brake and a cheese press'. (HRO 1573B/109/2)

- Ha 13b** 1574 John Templer, miller, bequeaths 'unto my sons Edmund and Nicholas and to either of them, a swarm of bees'. (1574B/172/1)
- Ha 13c** 1575 Nicholas Gillian, shoemaker, inventory: in the backside 'ii stalls and a half of bees - viiis'. (1575B/27/2)
- Ha 13d** 1577 Christopher Newman of Hatherden, administration inventory: 'iiii stalls of bees in the beefold - iiiii s'. (1577Ad/32)
- Ha 13e** 1587 Thomas Frances, yeoman of Charlton, will: to younger son William '... and I give him three beestalls', and 3 beestalls each to younger son John and to Faith his only daughter; inventory: 'xx beestalls price - xx s'. (1587A/031/1-2)
- Ha 13f** 1591 Catherine Frances, widow [of Thomas, above], inventory: in the barten 'II beestalls - 16s'. (1591A/038/2)
- Ha 13g** 1592 George Suttin, yeoman of Hatherden, inventory: in the garden 'ix stalls of bees - xiii', also '...a candle mould, ...'. (1592A/110/2)
- Ha 13h** 1599 John Meales, husbandman of Charlton, will: 'I give unto my three daughters Margaret, Dorothy and Sibyl, to each of them x' in money, a ewe and a lamb, a stall of bees and a pewter platter to be delivered unto them when they come to the age of 18 years.'; inventory: in the barten '6 stalls of bees - xviii'. (1599A/54/1-2)
- Ha 13i** 1599 Richard North, husbandman, will: 'I give to my daughter Jane Northe all my tenements ... which I hold by lease in New Street with all my stall[s] of bees which standeth there except one stall of bees which I do give unto Thomas Williams'; inventory: in the backside 'iiii stalls of bees - viii'. (1599A/58/1-2)
- Ha 13j** 1601 Nicholas Edwards, husbandman of Foxcotte, inventory: in the field: 'v beestalls - xvi'. (1601A/18/2)
- Ha 14a** 1 Jan. 1562/3 Alice Danyell, widow, will: 'I give and bequeath to the reparacions of my parish church of Andover three beestalls. ... to [three grandchildren] every of them a beestall. ... to Joan [Baverstoke] ii beestalls, ... and to every of their children a beestall. ... to my Margaret Kegyll my daughter ... iiiii beestalls. ... to Alice Tomms ... a beestall [and one beestall each to 8 other people] ... and my goddaughter a beestall. ... to John Templer's children that he had now by his last wife ii beestalls.' (HRO 1563A/20/1)
- Ha 14b** 12 Jan. 1562 Alice Danill [Danyell], inventory: xxvii beestalls - xl'; total value £8.18.8. (HRO 1563A/20/2)

HERTFORDSHIRE (Ht)

- Ht 1a** 1631, Amy Bridon, widow, Caddington, will (proved 1633): 'to Thomas Bridon and John Bridon my two Sonnes: One Hive of Bees ... to each one of them' (Bedford County Record Office, from E. Briden).
- Ht 3a** 12 Oct. 1587, 'The Tenants and Parishioners of Flamstead, ... make an agreement with the Parson, of offerings and tythes to be paid, ... Item 14: For honey, wax, flax and hemp, the tenth in their kynde.' (The Halsey Collection of Manuscripts, Herts County Office, No. 17307; from E. Briden)
- Ht 4 Documents held at Hertfordshire Record Office, except Ht 4k** (from P. F. Sibley, 1987).
- Ht 4g** 9 May 1648 Francis Sibley, maltster and yeoman, Wheathampstead, inventory: 'in the yarde and backside 6 hives of bees', £3.0s.0d.; total value £269.18.3. (ref. HCRO 119HW10)
- Ht 4h** 24 Feb. 1636 Edward Sibley, yeoman, Kings Walden, accounts: 'It. for beehives xxd' [presumably sold]. (37HW40)
- Ht 4i** 28 May 1638 Agnes Godfrey, widow, Kings Walden, inventory: 'on[e] stock of bees', 4/-; total value £6.15.8. (H23/946)
- Ht 4j** 10 Sept 1647 Solomon Sibley, Wheathampstead, inventory: 'eight stocks of bees £2.13.4, ... honie £0.10.0'; total value £122.0.0. (119HW5)
- Ht 4k** 17 Jan. 1670 Rose Sibley, Hexton, will: 'I give and bequeath unto my three Grandchildren Joseph Jeremy and Rose Woodward Each of them One Stock of Bees Imediately after my decease And the Rest of my Bees I give unto my daughter Anna Woodward for hir life and after her decease To be equally divided amongst hir Children.' (ref. Public Record Office - Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/349)
- Ht 5, Ht 8, Ht 10 Wills and inventories, St. Stephens parish, St. Albans** (from M. B. Parker, The Bricket Wood Society).
- Ht 5a** 13 Apr. 1627 Amye Bailey, inventory: 'One swarme of bees, 5s. 0d.'
- Ht 5b** 5 Apr. 1611 Agnes Bird, inventory: 'Two stockes of bees, 5s. 0d.'
- Ht 5c** 29 Apr. 1595 John Cowley, inventory: 'The bees in the garden, 5s. 0d.'
- Ht 5d** 10 Nov. 1617 Hugh Rolfe, inventory: 'Two stocks of Bees, 10s. 0d.'

Ht 8a 30 Nov. 1525 William Clerk, will: 'to the high awter of saint Stevyns church xij d And to o(t)r lady lyghte there viij d ... to Tho(ma)s Clerke ... an hyve of beyn & oon of the two hony pottes the which be w(i)th his father in law and the other hony pott to his said father in lawe.' 'to Willi(a)m hyll ... two hyves of beyn standyng at Marnams. Also to Willi(a)m Flenys ... oon hyve of beyn standyng at Marnams. Also to

Thomas Cooke ... oon hyve of beyn. And to Marnams wyffe two hyves of beyn. And to Thomas Wheler oon hyve of bey(n).' (Archdeaconry Records HCRO 2 AR 194v)

Ht 8b 8 July 1650 Francis Graie, inventory: includes 6 hives of bees.

Ht 8c 21 Apr. 1698 Richard Knowlton, inventory: 'a Stocke of bees, 16s. 0d.'

Ht 8d 27 Mar. 1694 William Lovett, inventory: 'the poultry, wood & Bees'.

Ht 8e 3 Feb. 1611/2 Robert Royce, inventory: '3 stockes of bees, 5s. 0d.'

Ht 8f 5 Dec. 1608 Laurence Taylor, inventory: '3 stockes of bees, 5s. 0d.'

Ht 8g 1547 William Woodward, will: 'I bequethe to Andrew Woodward my son a swarme of bees & I wyll them to be delyvered the next yere after my decesse.'

Ht 10a 13 Apr. 1616 Richard Griffyn, inventory: 'a swarm of bees, vj vijij'.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE (Hu)

Hu 1a 1529 Elizabeth Maxey, widow, Old Weston, will: 'a be heyffe' to our Lady Guild of Old Weston, 'a beheyyffe' to William Fysshere and the same to William Kyngce.

(Hunts Archdeaconry Will Vol. 3, f.110(v), Huntingdon Record Office; from J.-A. Buck, 1986)

LANCASHIRE (La)

La 1, La 2 Wills and inventories, Pilsworth except 2d (from J. P. Ashton, Bury Archaeological Group, 1984).

La 1a Nov. 1666 Margaret Lomax, will: 'And whereas I have five hives two in my son Richard Lomax his garden, one in my garden and two at Lawrence Lomax part being myne I doe dispose of the same as followeth. The two hives in my sonnes garden my will is yt of the same James Lomax and Margaret his sister have one swarm and Mary Booth have another swarm and my daughter in law to have the rest. And as for that in my own garden and part of the two in Lawrence Lomax garden my daughter Elizabeth shall take them into her own hands and give unto her three daughters Esther, Margaret and Ann and also to Catherine Booth every one of them a swarm and the rest convert to her own use.'

La 2a 9 Nov. 1587 Richard Lomax, inventory: 'two hives 10 shillings'; total value £135.0.0.

La 2b 25 Jan. 1613 James Byreham alias Hopwood, inventory: 'Item in hives £1.0.0.'; total value £106.0.0.

La 2c 21 Sept. 1666 Thomas Chadwick, inventory: 'Item in honey 9 shillings - item in half a hive 3s. 4d.'; total value £308.12.5.

La 2d Feb. 1610 Thomas Leyland, Heapey, Leyland, inventory: 'one swarm of bees 4 shillings'; total value £37.1.0.

LEICESTERSHIRE (Le)

Le 1a 1538 Loughborough inventory: '20 hyves of bees vj of them xvs and the other xiiij at xijis'. Another undated inventory includes 13 hives at £3. 5s.

(from A. Richmond, 1983)

LINCOLNSHIRE (Li)

Li 1 Probate inventories, Washingborough, Lincoln, and one will, held at Lincoln Archives Office, Lincoln Castle (from B. Webster, 1987).

Li 1a Sept. 1551 Robt Wright, 'vi bee hives x'. (LAO PI 19/19)

Li 1b Apr. 1552 Xpof Wright, 'xij bee hyves xx'. (20/125)

Li 1c Nov. 1558 Rchd. Johnson, 'ij hyves of bees iij'. (32/326)

Li 1d Sept. 1558 John Paley, 'iij hyves of bees x'. (33/146)

Li 1e May 1558 Robt. Cook, 'x hyves of bees xx'. (35/40)

Li 1f Sept. 1582 Hamd. Clarke, 'the bees xx'. 'Honey and waxe iij'. (67/328)

Li 1g May 1584 Hamd. Gentle, husbandman, 'iij stokes of beese with other things'. (71/113)

Li 1h Nov. 1586 Essabell Cook, 'the beyes xxvij'. (74/207)

Li 1i Sept. 1587 John Gentle, yeoman, 'the bees xx'. (74/285)

Li 1j Apr. 1589 Robt. Boothby, fisher, 'sixe swarmes of bees xx'. (77/119)

Li 1k Mar. 1592 Thos. Cook, 'five stockes of bees xiiij iij'. (79/12)

Li 1l Feb. 1592 Xpfer Archer, 'two swarme of beis v'. (81/733)

Li 1m May 1591 Thos. Enderbye, 'bees and other implements xxx'. (LCC Admon 1591:330)

Li 1n Oct. 1608 Anthony Watson, parson, 'three gallons of hony viij, two pound of waxe with two wax candells xiiij, ij stocks of Bees vj 8'. (Sundry Wills & Admons I.437)

Li 1o May 1614 Thos Burrill, yeoman, 'the beese x'. (PI 114/342)

Li 1p Apr. 1610 Edw. Wimbish, Gent., 'v stockes of beese xxv' (LCC Admon 1610/260)

Li 1q Apr. 1610 Willm Sankey, Gent., 'ij stocks of bees vj'. (PI 106/396)

Li 1r July 1616 Xpof Stoyles, miller, 'three stockes of Bees xxv' (LCC Admon 1616/345)

Li 1s Dec. 1629 Wm Clarke, tailor, '2 stockes of Bees x'. (LCC Admon 1625/51)

Li 1t July 1640 John Chippingdale Esq., 'iij Stockes of bees 1-10-0'. (LCC Admon 1640/71)

Li 1u Jan. 1691 Helling Pickering, '4 stockes of bees 01.00.00'. (PI 190/53)

Li 1v Nov. 1697 Magdalen Sampson, widow, 'in ye Garden two Stocks of bees 00.05.00'. (193/203)

Li 1w 23 Apr. 1625 Thomas Squire, labourer, Marton, Timberland, will: 'to my two brothers William and John a Swarme of Bees to be divided betwixt them.' (LCC Wills 1624-5, p. 134)

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (*Nr*)

Nr 1a 1560 William Peake, husbandman, Spratton, will: 'To Robert my son ... hyves. To my brother Gregorie 6 hyves. ... Supervisors: John Heyward and John Haddon and for their paines eche of the a hyve.' (Wills proved at Archdeaconry Court of Northampton. Book R, fol.69; from J. Goff, 1977)

SHROPSHIRE (*Sh*)

Sh 1 Inventories, Market Drayton (from S. V. Rowley, 1986)

- Sh 1a** 1552 Robert Alcroft (probably a baker), 'ii stalls of bees' 2s.; total value £7.9.8.
- Sh 1b** 1629 William Higgin, yeoman, 'bees' 13s. 4d.; total £311.7.8.
- Sh 1c** 1680 John Booth, husbandman, 'bees' 6s.; total £34.4.2.
- Sh 1d** 1684 Robert Shenton, Gent. (farmer), '2 Hives of Bees'.
- Sh 1e** 1692 Richard Bayly, gardener, 'three stalls of Bees' £1; total £32.9.2.

Sh 2a Bridgnorth Borough Accounts include an entry in 1598 'for a potell of methyglyn' [honey-based drink] for entertaining, and a similar entry in 1618. (from E. H. Pee)

Sh 7a 23 July 1215, 300 lbs wax were to be sent from Northampton to Bruges [Bridgnorth] for King John's use during his 3-day stay; wax candles were to be lighted before sacred relics which he brought with him. (from E. H. Pee)

STAFFORDSHIRE (*St*)

St 1 Inventories, Rugeley parish, held at Lichfield Joint Record Office, transcribed by D. M. C. Bramwell (from M K Neal, 1987).

- St 1a** 5 June 1680 Nicholas Lea, maltster, 'tow stales of beese with (illegible) poultry £1'.
- St 1b** 7 June 1684 Thomas Startin of Brereton, husbandman, 'in the chamber over the buttery ... beehives. ... In the garden ... 4 stalls of bees'.

St 2 Inventories, Standon near Eccleshall, held at Lichfield Joint Record Office (from A. W. Bednall, 1987).

- St 2a** May 1538 Margaret Laurans, 'ij stoks of byne xx^d'.
- St 2b** 1547 John Badnall, 'ij stallys of beys iij*s* iij^d'.
- St 2c** Aug. 1618 Ann Heath, 'one stale of bees iij*s* iij^d'.
- St 2d** Oct. 1648 Robert Levitt, 'Bees 7^s'.
- St 2e** Feb. 1634/5 Henry Thorley, 'on hive of bees 2^s 6^d'.
- St 2f** Mar. 1663/4 Thomas Levitt, 'the bees 10^s'.
- St 2g** Oct. 1728 Walter Whittington, 'Bees and Bee Bench 10^s'.

SURREY (*Sr*)

Sr 2 Surrey Record Society, Surrey Wills (from J. Harding).

- Sr 2a** 22 Jan. 1597-8 Nicholas Billinghamurst, yeoman, Puttenham, bequeaths all his bees at four different places. (No. III, pt 1, 1915, f.220)
- Sr 2b** 31 Oct. 1602 Gregorie Langforde, husbandman, Elstead, 'one stall of bees' to his godson. (No. VII, pt 2, 1916, 722, f.389)
- Sr 2c** 22 June 1603 William Rogers, husbandman, Chertsey, to 'Executor Mother Humfrie Rogers, 3 stalls of bees of the best, standing with my master. ... William Stiles, the younger, one stall of bees'. (No. VII, pt 2, 1916, 836, f.443)
- Sr 2d** 15 Dec. 1604 John Parishe, Limpsfeilde, to 'Maid Anne Meddurste, one stock of bees standing next to the gate, being a straw hive.' (No. VII, pt 2, 1916, 927, f.490)
- Sr 2e** 4 Aug. 1606 John Aston, Dogslond in Farnham, bequeaths 'seven stalls of bees'. (No. VII, pt 2, 1916, 1015, f.541)
- Sr 2f** 14 Mar. 1605-6 Thomas Atlee, yeoman, East Clandon, bequeaths 'bees kept in the garden betwixt my son Thomas Atlee, deceased, and myself'. (No. VII, pt 2, 1916, 1016, f.541)
- Sr 2g** 13 Oct. 1485 John Whelere, Guideforde, 'to the light "beate Pietatis" one pound of wax each year during the life of my wife. ... To the lights of St. Michael and St. Christopher in the said church of Holy Trinity 1 lb of wax each. ... To Thomas son of my wife 4 ewes and a hyve of bees price 2s. To John my son 4 ewes and a hyve of bees price 2s.' (Vol. V, 1921, 63, f.19)
- Sr 2h** 6 Mar. 1598-9 Thomas Peto, yeoman, Thursley, bequeaths 'All my bees equally among my wife and children' [one daughter, four sons]. (Vol. V, 1921, 508, f.283)
- Sr 2i** 6 Jan. 1607-8 John Loufe, the younger, Frensham, to brother Richard 'all my bees that were between him and I.' (No. XV, 1920, 1148, f.615)
- Sr 2j** 25 Nov. 1594 John Abot, yeoman, Cobham, bequeaths 'a swarm of bees'. (No. XV, 1920, 477, f.271)

Sr 4a 16 June 1605 John Reaves alias May, Tilford, Farnham, will: 'to [daughter] Anne ... a stall of bees when 21; to sons John and William Reaves a stall of bees each'.
(Greater London Record Office; abstract of unfiled Surrey wills 1595–1649, 154 DW/PA/5/1605/58)

SUSSEX (Ss)

Ss 1, Ss 2 **Probate inventories and one will, West Sussex Record Office, except Ss 11** (from J. Pennington, 1992).

Ss 1a 27 Feb. 1620 Richard Plumbe, husbandman, Coombes, 'bees, hens & ducks 10s.'; total value £79.
(WSRO EP1/29/057/002)

Ss 1b 21 Apr. 1680 Mercy Willett, widow, Botolphs, '3 stalls of bees 7s.6d.'; total £28.5s.6d.
(29/026/006)

Ss 1c 1612 Roger Easted, husbandman, Steyning, '1 stall of bees'. (29/183/002)

Ss 1d 1619 Joan Lassiter, widow, 'honey'. (29/183/013)

Ss 1e 1632 John Whithell, schoolmaster, '7 beehives'. (29/183/031)

Ss 1f 1637 Philip Turner, yeoman, 'honey'. (29/183/046)

Ss 1g 1642 Nevill Hearsi, innkeeper '3 stalls of bees'. (29/183/057)

Ss 1h 1687 Philip Butcher, butcher, '2 hives of bees'. (29/183/138)

Ss 1i 1703 Mary Braine, widow, 'some honey'. (29/183/166)

Ss 1j 1724 William Allen, yeoman, 'bees'. (29/183/202)

Ss 1k 1732 Francis Goble, yeoman, '4 stalls of bees'. (29/183/214)

Ss 1l 1731 John Eede, Gent., '6 stalls of bees'. (Public Record Office, Prob/31 95/571)

Ss 2c 1640 John Pellatt, wheelwright, Bramber, will: 'unto my eldest Sonne John Pellatt all my St(o)ck of Bees in Bramber'. (WSRO S.Dean 38)

Ss 2d 8 Dec. 1679 Richard Newman, Wiston, 2 stalls of bees and some bottles of mead. (WSRO EP1/29/211/032)

WARWICKSHIRE (Wa)

Wa 1 **Wills and inventories in Lichfield Joint Record Office** (from M. K. Neal, 1987).

Wa 1a 19 May 1578 Thomas Allat, Lower Shuckburgh, inventory: 'in the stable ... eight hives of bees 12'.

Wa 1b 27 May 1664 Thomas Allitt, Priors Marston, will: to 'my beloved wife Jone Allet ... on stock of Bees which she pleas to Chuse'.

Wa 1c 27 June 1664 Thomas Allitt, Priors Marston, inventory: 'in the garden 3 hives of Bees ptiu £0-6-0'.

Wa 1d 3 Dec. 1707 John Allett, Priors Marston, will: 'unto my s^d Loveing Wife ... One Stocke of Bees'.

WESTMORLAND (We)

We 4 **Accounts of two Troutbeck families** (from M. Parsons, 1990).

We 4a 1700s, Browne family: 12 Apr. 1715 'Bees 4 casts 4d.' (Browne papers 8/1); 21 Dec. 1767 'Paid sister Anne for a swarm of bees 8/6' (Browne papers 8/4); 15 June 1776 'Beehives 2/-', 2 Nov. 1776 'Received for 4 lb. bees wax 6/-', 1 July 1786 'Beehives 1/6', 2 Aug. 1788 'Received ... for 2 lb. honey 1/4' (Browne papers 8/5).

We 4b 1850s Robert Birkett of Middlings: 30 Sept. 1858 'Sold to Miss Myers 12 lb. honey 15/-'; 2 Oct. 1858 'Sold to ditto 6 lb. honey 7/6'; 23 Dec. 1858 'Rec. of Miss Myers for 22 lb. honey £1.6.0'. (Birkett accounts 20/1)

YORKSHIRE (Yo)

Yo 1 **Inventories held at Probate Registry, York** (from A. Harris, 1956).

Yo 1a June 1693 Ralph Richardson, Warter, bees £1.

Yo 1b Aug. 1693 Edw'd. Constable, yeoman, N. Cliffe, 6 stocks bees 15/-.

Yo 1c July 1698 Sam'l. Johnson, grassman, Routh, 2 beehives 10/-.

Yo 1d Dec. 1688 Peter Harper, husbandman, Latham, 8 stocks bees £2.

Yo 1e Jan. 1692 Rob't. Thornwill, husbandman, Ellerton, 2 stocks bees 6/8.

Yo 1f Feb. 1686 Rob't. Wake, yeoman, Broughton, parish of 'Amerby', 3 hives of bees £1.

Yo 1g Feb. 1689 Wm. Goodlad, Watton, 2 hives of bees.

Yo 1h Apr. 1689 Wm. Harrison, Tibthorpe, 2 beehives 3/4.

Yo 1i Mar. 1689 Jane Blanchard, E. Cottingwith, bees 18/-.

Yo 1j May 1686 Michael Peers, Gilling, 3 hives £1.

Yo 1k Feb. 1688 Mark Clarkson, husbandman, Wheldrake, 3 stocks of bees 10/- (2 fitches bacon 10/-).

Yo 1l Feb. 1688 Jno. Waide, Tanstern in Holderness, 4 bee skeps £1.

Yo 1m May 1689 Eliz. Rasin, Willerby, 4 beehives 'with Bees in them' £1.12.0.

Yo 1n Jan. 1688 Rob't. Woolley, Holme on Spalding Moor, 2 stocks of bees 10/- (4 geese 5/).

Yo 1o Nov. 1688 Rog'r. Waudby, husbandman, Sancton, 6 beehives 30/-.

Yo 1p July 1690 Rob't. Watson, yeoman, W. Ella, 8 beehives £2.

Yo 1q Jan. 1691 Wm. Gray, Escrick, 13 stocks bees £1.

Yo 1r May 1691 Rob't Fox, Flixton, 3 beehives £1 (2 mares & filly £4).

- Yo 1s** June 1691 Gilbert Lambert, H. Cranswick, 11 beehives 30/-.
Yo 1t Oct. 1691 Robt. Ramsay, Spaldington, 3 stocks bees 15/-.
Yo 1u Feb. 1738 Robt. Burge, Sawdon (N.R.), 2 beehives £1.
Yo 1v May 1738 Robt. Turner, Hessewood, 6 beeskeps £2 (2 swine & some manure £2).
Yo 1w Apr. 1740 Saml. Brocklesbank, W. Ayton, N.R., 10 beehives £2.2.0.
Yo 1x Jan. 1710 Mary Watson, N. Ferriby, 2 beehives 10/- (poultry 3/4).
Yo 1y Sept. 1706 Susannah Coates, Little Barugh, N. R., 1 beehive 5/-.
Yo 1z Mar. 1707 Jno. Langdale, Nafferton, 4 stocks of bees £1.
Yo 1aa Jan. 1691 Marm'ke. Hubanck, H. Cranswick, 2 hives bees 8/-.
Yo 1bb 1742 Jos. Borgoine, Cottingham, 7 bee skeps 30/- (2 horses £2, cow £4).
Yo 1cc June 1688 Robt. Narbutts, H. Bushell, N. R., 3 beehives 13/4.
Yo 1dd June 1692 Chas. Roper, yeoman, Octon Grange, 6 winter 'stoales' of bees £3.
Yo 1ee Nov. 1692 Thos. Stephenson, N. Skirlaugh, 1 beehive 5/-.

Yo 2 Documents from Yorkshire(?), source incomplete (from W. S. Woodhead, 1954).

Yo 2a 1608 'by common estimation of men, within the parish articulate, a swarme of Bees was and is worth vii s., a gallon of honny [14 lb.] vi s. viii d., a pounce of wax x d., a chicken iii d., a cocke of haie ii d. ... a hive of bees comonly called catchers' (RAs 14 A/22 1608).

Yo 2b 1582 'An accompte of the Yierlie tythes & profitts of the Vicaridge of Shereburne in Harfordleyth ... 1582 to 1588. In anno dni 1582. In primis the tyeth haie beinge a wete yere sold for the some of xvii s. Item the tyeth honie x s. Item the tyeth geese & piggis xiii s. iii d. ...' (R vii G 2690).

Yo 7a 24 Apr. 1506 Margaret, widow of John Norton, will: 'I leave all my bees towards keeping up a light in the chapel of Bilborough church as long as it shall please God to preserve them.' (source unknown)

Yo 8 Memorandum book of Samuel Bower, 1641-7, unpublished (Sheffield City Libraries CD [Copley Deeds] 474).

Yo 8a 29 May 1641 'My wifes a prime cast [swarm] out of 2^d [hive]'; 1642 'A latter swarme out of mine ... for my wife'; 6 June 1643 'Malls stocke cast a prime swarm; yt we intend for Sam [son]'; 8 June 1643 'Another prime swarme cast out of mine, intended for Bette [daughter]'; 19 June 1647 'A prime swarm ... given to my son John'.

Yo 8b 1641 'A 2^d swarme out of Malls undecimo Julij. All those out of 3.1.2.3 in one yere. They were bought at Cantley 1640 for 30s and a mett of wheat.'

Yo 10a 'Account of Tythe paid by John Dent to the Rector of Romalldkirk'

	<i>d</i>		<i>s-d</i>
1792 1 swarm bees	1	[1798-1801 No bees listed]	
1793 4 swarms	4	1802 1 swarm of Bees	2-0
1794 2	2	1803 3	6-0
1795 2	2	1804 2	5-0
1796 2	2		
1797 2	2		

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