

The Bee, its Keeper and Produce, in Irish and other Folk Traditions

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Introduction

In this essay, I hope to present a synopsis of the most important features of my M. Litt. research. Most of my work, to date, has been carried out in the Irish Folklore Commission Archive, situated within the Irish Folklore Department, UCD.¹ This archive includes two manuscript series — the Main Manuscripts which contain over 2000 bound volumes and the Schools' collection which amounts to over 500,000 pages. The manuscripts contain material from all over the country, from both children and adults. This material derives from responses to various questionnaires sent by the IFC to households around the country, and also transcripts from recorded sessions with various informants from around Ireland. The manuscripts are in both the Irish and English languages.

My particular interest in the folklore of the bee and its keeper evolved due to my constant involvement with the bee-keeping calendar from an early age — my father being a bee-keeper for over thirty years. In my final year as an undergraduate, I undertook a primary study of the bee within the area of Folklore. I soon learned that there was potential for a broader, more detailed study, and continuing the research has introduced me to an abundance of previously undiscovered material.

This essay will concentrate on some of the myths, legends and beliefs which are attached to the *Bee* itself within Irish Folk Tradition.

[...] So work the honey bees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The art of order to a peopled kingdom;
They have a king and officer of sorts;
Where some like magistrates, remain at home,
Others like merchants venture trade abroad;
Others like soldiers armed in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds;
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the royal tent of their emperor:
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold,
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,
The poor mechanic porters crowding in

Their heavy burdens at this narrow gate,
The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,
Delivering o'er to executor pale
The lazy yawning drones [...]ⁱⁱ

It is important, before embarking on the study of lore and legends surrounding the bee, to have some understanding as to how this creature and its family operate and survive. This is eloquently related in verse by Shakespeare, where he manages to encompass all the elements which feature within a hive. Shakespeare commends the bee's artistry and order, and asserts that humankind can learn from this. In addition, the poet describes the ruling body of the Queen, whose presence assures life in the hive; the drones (magistrates), who lazily inhabit the hive and await the return of the workers (soldiers), off whom they steal the fruits of their labour. Finally, the brutal massacre of the drone is described, whereby the workers kill their brothers, and banish them from the security of the hive.

Such documentation of bees in literature and in art has allowed the approximate date of domestication of the bee to be estimated. In fact, the earliest reference documenting bee-keeping appears on the walls of the Egyptian sun temple of Ni-user-re at Abusir which dates from around 2400 B.C.ⁱⁱⁱ These inscriptions appear in the form of hieroglyphs, giving reference to the use of beehives. This early interest in bee-keeping in Egypt most probably evolved due to the popular belief that the bee originated there, from the sun god, Ra.^{iv}

Within our own tradition, bees are said to have been brought to Ireland from Wales in the 5th century, by a saint named Modomnóc. This date of arrival is substantiated by linguistic evidence of native Irish words existing at this time (the 5th and 6th centuries); such as *beach* (bee), *mil* (honey), and *miodh* (mead, *i.e.*, fermented honey served as an alcoholic beverage).^v St Modomnóc, possibly to be identified with St Molaga (or Molaige), is said to be a native of Fermoy in Cork, having a field, *Páirc Molaga*, named after him.^{vi}

The legend which concerns St Modomnóc's introduction of bees to Ireland begins in Wales, where he is appointed caretaker or keeper of the bees in a Welsh monastery. When ordered to return to his kin in Ireland, Modomnóc was followed to the port by his loyal bees. The saint brought the swarm with him to Wexford, where they settled and spread throughout the rest of the country. After Modomnóc's swarm fled their native home in the monastery in search of their master, it was said that bees were never again encountered in this area.^{vii} In some variations of this legend, the bees are reported to have followed Modomnóc three times before being accepted by their keeper.^{viii} Both of these features pertaining to the bees — that of following their master with a sense of affection and loyalty and that of devotedly abandoning their home after the loss of their keeper — are recurring motifs which can be witnessed in many folktales and legends concerning the bee.

One such story, contained in an early *Ireland's Own* magazine, describes a real life experience of how bees can possess a certain bond with their keeper, as seen between St Modomnóc and his swarm.^{ix} The story describes the death of a small scale farmer from Missouri, USA, named Charles D. Hitt. As Charles specialised in water-melon production, he decided to take up bee-keeping, knowing that both trades would profitably complement each other. Regrettably, on a cold day in February 1959, Charles D. Hitt met his death after a severe heart attack. After the body had been removed from the funeral parlour, the mourners assembled in a nearby farm house. At this time, a distinctive buzzing sound was heard resounding above the mourners' heads, despite the highly unlikely appearance of bees in mid-winter months. When it was time for the body to leave the church, and the mourners also made preparations to leave, bees were seen to be 'flying around in the strangest manner. Could they possibly know that their friend and master was dead?' An hour or more later, family and friends congregated around the grave of Charles Hitt. As they neared the grave, one of them exclaimed:

'The bees are coming!' The funeral director, the sexton and others watched as the bees swarmed. A great black cloud of them flew from the farm across the valley, covering every blossom on the flower-bedecked grave. They settled harmlessly on the faces, arms and hands of those around...

In incredible excitement, the bee-keeper's son observed similar movements at home: 'Dad's bees are leaving the hives by their hundreds. I don't think they will come back...'. The bees never returned.

In folklore tradition, bees are seen to have a sense and understanding of death. They appear to realise the connotations of death and its absolute nature. They react accordingly, by giving respect by what means they can. The reason for the fleeing of Charles Hitt's bees may be related to the fact that they were not notified of their master's death. The old custom of 'Telling the Bees' ensures that the bees will remain with the family following a death, and that they will feel involved. It will also guard against any feeling of offence the bees may experience due to exclusion from family affairs. An IFC informant from Glenariffe, Rosie Emerson, relates the importance of sharing such information with the bees:

'...They said that if you didn't tell the bees of a wedding a birth or a death they're that Gentle, they would take offence and leave...Who was it beside Jimmy Bann that didn't bother telling the bees and they said not a bee stayed with him after...'.^x

Mrs Emerson continues to describe the procedures undergone by one of her neighbours when relating the news of death to the bees:

'Old Stewart...Jimmy Bann's above in Carnahaugh, he surely told the bees everything. He wouldn't miss it. When his mother died he put on his best suit, washed and shaved himself...this is all gospel remember, you ask Quinn, too...washed and shaved and in his best polished Sunday boot: the same as if he was going to Mass. He went out to the scaps (old straw bee-hive) and told them (the bees) that their mistress was dead, and not a one of them left...'.^{xi}

There are further procedures undertaken when relating the news of death to a hive of bees. Hilda Ransome describes one woman preparing some spice cake and sugar in a dish, placing the sweets before the hive, then rattling a bunch of keys, and repeating:

'Honey bees, honey bees, hear what I say.
Your master, J. A., has passed away.
But his wife now begs you will freely stay.
And gather honey for many a day.
Bonny bees, Bonny bees, hear what I say.'^{xii}

The death of one's bees is the penalty for failing to inform them of important news. However, this show of neglect has been blamed for other, more serious mishaps. We are told of a woman whose husband — a bee-keeper — died at the time she was expecting their second child. She believes that her failure to tell the bees of their keeper's death is responsible for the loss of her child in labour.^{xiii} It appears to be a prevailing consensus, that by doing 'harm' or offending the bees, one could be open to punishment. Such was the reality for an individual in Cork, who smothered and killed a hive in order to steal the honey produce from the workers' labour:

'It was considered very unlucky to interfere or do any injury to bees. I heard my mother saying there was a person smothered a hive o' bees on 'em wan [one] time, to stale [steal] the honey. They never knew who done it, but they suspected the people, for they hadn't a bit o' [of] luck after...'^{xiv}

Another custom carried out immediately following a death, is the positioning of a black crepe upon the hive. This serves to safe-guard the health of the bees. Informants from Cork and Limerick verify the practice of this custom in their counties: 'If there are bees in a place and anybody dies in the house, unless they put a piece of crepe on top of the beehive, all the bees will die...'^{xv} John Whittier (1807-1892) successfully coalesces all the above beliefs and customs in his poem, aptly entitled *Telling the Bees*:

[...] Just the same as a month before, —
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door, —
Nothing chanced but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

And the song she was singing ever since

In my ear sounds on:-
'Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!'^{xvi}

It is not all darkness and death which surrounds the bee in folk tradition. The positive energies of fortune and luck can also be attributed to the insect. A common belief amongst many communities considers the arrival of a swarm of bees to be a lucky omen.^{xvii} The arrival of a single bee is equally capable of endowing a home with good luck.^{xviii} Walter Gojmerac however, relates that this luck is dependent upon the behaviour of the bee whilst in the house. If the bee flies in and out of the house, good luck is rendered. However, if the bee dies within the house, this abode receives bad luck. Gojmerac also contradicts the belief that the arrival of a swarm produces good luck. He relates: 'It is bad luck for a swarm to come to you, even in a dream. To dream of bees in a swarm is an omen of death, and dream of a sting means a friend will betray you.'^{xix} This view of bees bringing bad luck is echoed by another informant from Co. Roscommon, Mrs. Anne Hanley. She relates how a swarm of bees came to her property just before her husband died: 'I was glad to do away with them then, for I considered that they brought bad luck about the house...'^{xx}

Elsewhere, however, attitudes to bees are more positive. In Germany, for example, if bees swarm on a branch, this branch when used to direct cattle to the market, will ensure that the animals sell at a good price.^{xxi} If a bee alights on someone's hand, it connotes that money is close to hand, and if a single bee lands on someone's head, this person will experience great success in life.^{xxii} The presence of bees is said to promote productivity, as demonstrated by the story of the Reaper, who always kept a bee close to his scythe:

Once upon a time there was man cutting oats with two other men and he was able to show two swarths [piles of grass] to their one, and he went over the ditch and the other men went to look at his scythe and there was a little box at the bottom and there was a trap door on it and they opened it and a brown backed bee flew out and when he came back he could not row [cut] at all and went off home.^{xxiii}

Similarly, the reward of the worker's labour, honey, is also endowed with good luck and fortune. In Germany, the custom of anointing a baby's lips with honey guarded against any death in family. In fact, in early Christian days, honey was often used at Baptisms along with holy water. In other parts of Europe, it was customary to use honey in matrimonial ceremonies, again, by placing honey on the lips of the bride. Moreover, the sign of the cross, made with honey, was often put on the door of the new house to bring luck and banish demons. It is also a custom for the bridegroom's mother to await the newly-wed couple in their new home, bearing the gift of a jar of honey.^{xxiv} It is possible

that this custom was the seed from which the ‘honeymoon’ was born, or perhaps it evolved from the belief which regards honey as a powerful aphrodisiac!^{xxv}

Other associations between bees, honey and lovers, demonstrate people’s trust in a bee’s ability to distinguish true love from a mockery of love. One tradition from Central Europe describes how women used to lead their lovers past beehives, believing that if their partners were unfaithful, the bees would detect this, and sting them.^{xxvi} The hurtful implications of a sting in such a situation is also adopted by Truman Capote in his story *House of Flowers*. Here, the confused character of Otilie resorts to the God of Houngan to discover how one is to know when one has experienced true love. Houngan gives sound advice: ‘You must catch a wild bee, he said, and hold it in your closed hand [...] if the bee does not sting, then you will know you have found love...’^{xxvii}

The connection between bees and the gods is an integral part of the lore and legends surrounding this creature. With Christian folk tradition, bees are said to derive directly from God, through the tears of Christ and also the wounded skin of Job.^{xxviii} A Welsh legend describes how bees derived from Paradise. In Paradise, bees were white in colour, and it was only after Adam and Eve indulged in the fruits of the garden, that they turned brown.^{xxix} This belief reappears in the form of a simile in a poem by Dafydd ap Gwilym, a contemporary of Chaucer. Gwilym likens snowflakes to bees from heaven:

Gwenyn o Nef Gwynion ynt.
[Bees from Heaven white are they.]^{xxx}

It can be seen, therefore, that the bees are largely associated with what is sacred. After being brought to Ireland by St Modomnóc, the bees’ connection and relationship with various other saints flourished. Thus, bees have been assigned their own patron saint — Gobnait, from Ballyvourney, Co. Cork. Counties Kerry, Waterford, and Tipperary also lay claim to this saint who is also known as Gobnata and Gobnet. This has led to uncertainty as to the rightful place of birth of Gobnait. One theory gives Dún Caoin as her place of birth, where her name still adorns the village and church of Cill Gobnait.^{xxxi} Similarly, there is a parish named Cill Gobnait in Co. Waterford, explaining why St Gobnait is held as the patron saint of this area. Another source renders her a native of Co. Clare, from which she ventured to the Aran Islands. Regardless of her genuine place of birth, it can be seen through folk narrative that St Gobnait is a much admired and highly revered saint in Ireland.

St Gobnait seems to be best known for her courage in protecting her people by miraculous aid. As with many Irish saints, St Gobnait reveals her wondrous influence over animals and nature itself. Thus, she is seen to combat a team of enemies single-handedly, with the use of her bees alone:

‘Tháinig na saighdúirí Gallda agus tógadar mórán stuic i mBaile Mhuirne, ach ar an slige dhóibh ag imeacht an bóthar soir do scaoil Naomh Gobnait na beacha as an mbeachaire. Tosnuigeadar ar na

saighdúirí a chealg chun nar fágadar súil ná srón ionnta agus b'éigin dóibh an stuic fhágaint 'na ndiadh'.

[The English soldiers came and took a lot of stock in Ballyvourney, but on their way out the east road, Saint Gobnait released the bees from the bee-hive. They started to sting the soldiers until they were left without an eye or a nose and they were forced to leave the stuff behind them.]^{xxxii}

Another story relates how a powerful chief prayed to Gobnait for assistance, recognizing his troops to be incapable of victory. Gobnait granted his request by transforming a hive of bees into military men.^{xxxiii}

Another rendition tracing the steps of Gobnait describes the saint fleeing her native land of Clare in order to escape a family feud. From here, she travelled to the Aran Islands, where she erected a church which still retains her name. Gobnait was spurred to move again following a visit from angels. The angels told her she must seek her place of resurrection, a place where nine white deer grazed. She moved to Waterford, where she founded a church at 'Kilgobnet', and it was here that she encountered the nine white deer as predicted by the angels.^{xxxiv} The IFC main manuscript collection echoes this legend of St Gobnait's association with white deer, and suggests that the saint was indeed resurrected in the guise of one of the aforesaid animals: 'I heard the enemy was hunting Saint Gobnait and they met seven white deer in the forest and they passed on, but what was it, but St Gobnait and her six sisters...'.^{xxxv}

Bee-keepers have also been awarded their own patron saint, the early Christian St Ambrose, born in the year 340 in Lyon. Ambrose displayed his affection for bees at a very young age. Whilst in his cradle, a swarm of bees settled on him and he showed no distress when they ran over his face and even in and out of his mouth. After some time, it is recorded that the swarm flew very high and disappeared into the heavens. On 7 December 375, he was consecrated Bishop of Milan, having been elected by popular acclaim, against his own will and despite his strong objections. In office he worked for the poor, gave justice with compassion, resisted imperial tyranny and was loved by the people.^{xxxvi}

Another saint, Bega, otherwise known as St Bees, is best remembered for her work and care for the poor. Bees was the daughter of an Irish king and was said to be the most beautiful woman in the country. Similar to St Gobnait, Bees experienced a sacred encounter with an angel at an early age. Following this meeting, Bees vowed herself to the Spouse of virgins, and received a bracelet marked with the sign of the cross from the angel, which served as a seal of her celestial betrothal. The day before her arranged marriage with the son of the king of Norway, Bees fled and sought to follow the religious life. She soon received a nun's veil from St Aidan of Lindisfarne, and continued the work of founding monasteries around the country. She was epitomised by her eagerness to work and serve the people, and was affectionately remembered as one 'hastening from place to place like a bee laden with honey'.^{xxxvii}

Ostensibly, this sacred association of the bee is not widely experienced in today's society. However, a Harvest Festival is still celebrated in Stoneleigh in Britain once a year, to commemorate the reaping of honey from one working year. Also known as the 'Bee-keeper's Service', this festival has been a vibrant feature of the bee-keeping calendar since the 12th century. The service consists of a gathering of bee-keepers from different parts of the country who surround a hive holding brass candlesticks. The hive — like an altar — is adorned with gifts of honey, which are later distributed by the vicar to local almshouses and old folks' homes.^{xxxviii}

Honey, after all, is the bees' gift to the world and reward for their labour. Moreover, this ability to produce honey remains a gift unique to bees alone, a concept which taunted the Greek Philosopher, Aristotle. There were only three phenomena which remained a mystery to Aristotle:

- (1) *Intinn Mná* [Woman's mind]
- (2) *Líonadh agus trághadh na taoide* [The coming and going of the tide]
- (3) *Saothar na mbeach* [The work of the Bees].^{xxxix}

In his endeavour to understand the work of the bee, Aristotle erected a glass box, in which he placed a working hive. The bees instantly denied the philosopher such access to their activity, as their first task on entering the glass box was to cover its walls with wax. The main manuscripts of the IFC offer many renditions of this folktale. One informant from Tipperary, assigns the name of 'Harry Stackle' to the 'clever man' involved.^{xi} Similarly, 'Harry Stattle' appears as the confused philosopher in an account from Cork, the name of whom was most probably altered by oral transmission. In the following account, we witness how the philosopher's curiosity results in his blindness:

There was a clever man there long 'go and his name was Harry Stattle. He was supposed to be the cleverest man that ever lived and no one could be good enough for him. He was the best huntsman of his time and he had fourteen dogs and their names were — Fifo, Fiddler, Juno, Jiggles, Fido, Fanny, Farmer, Spanker, Spoken, Tannin, Joker, Dido, Miller, Ranger... But as clever as he was, there was one thing that went beyond him all his life and that was how did the bees make the honey. He tried every plan and couldn't find out. So to look, he made a glass hive and put the bees into it. 'Now', says he, 'I'll find out how they make the honey'. But when he came to the hive the next day to watch 'em making it, 'tis how they had it plastered all over with wax inside and he couldn't see a bit. He was so vexed that he hit it a kick and broke it and all the bees flew out and stung him and blinded him... He went away travelling then and he blind, and no one having any *meas* [respect] on him because he was blind and he had no *meas* on himself because he couldn't find out how the bees made the honey...^{xi}

It is no wonder that someone would seek the recipe of honey-making as it has been, and remains today, one of the most versatile of all food-stuffs and medical aids. The earliest inhabitants must have availed of the sweet tasting honey from wild bees' nests. Fermented honey, in the form of mead, was one of the few beverages available in mediaeval times, its prominence being preserved in the name of the Great Banqueting Hall at Tara, *Tech Mid Chuarda* (Mead Circling House).^{xlii} In 'Celtic Paradise', as

described by Hilda Ransome, there were rivers of mead, as in the home of Oisín and Niamh in Tír na nÓg, where

Abundant there are honey and wine
Death and decay thou wilt not see.^{xliii}

Apart from this mystical aura which radiates from honey, there are also the medical properties which are attributed to it. The cold and 'flu are ailments commonly treated by honey. Similarly, sore throats, asthma and lung trouble all find in honey a natural cure.^{xliiv} Less obvious are illnesses such as backache, psoriasis, arthritis, chicken-pox, whooping cough, ulcers, boils, gangrene, hay-fever — and many more — which have all owed their cure to honey's antiseptic nature. Apitherapy (medicine from bees) is also said to assist problems of sleeplessness, bed-wetting, hyperactivity and stress. Less conventional is the idea suggested by Albert the Great, teacher and theologian of the Middle Ages, who offered a special contraceptive formula, that of spitting thrice in the mouth of a frog or eating bees.^{xliv} This prescription is later contradicted, however, by Ó Catháin, who cites a recommendation to swallow a bee to ensure pregnancy, as it is said that women who keep bees are unable to bear children due to their profession!^{xlvi}

Wax, in the form of honey-comb, is the bees' primary produce, in which the honey is stored. Wax is likewise regarded with mystical and medical value. In Wales, a tenth-century king named Hywel the Good was responsible for drawing up a series of codes, which included many laws from earlier periods. One such law documents a familiar theory as to the origin of the bee:

'The origin of Bees is from Paradise, and on account of the sin of man they came hence, and God conferred his blessing upon them, therefore the mass cannot be said without the wax...'^{xlvii}

As previously ascertained, we witness the bee being presented as a somewhat mystical and sacred creature, thereby making its produce — beeswax — the only substance deemed worthy enough to use for making candles for the sacred mass.

Medically, wax has been a popular traditional cure for various ailments throughout the ages. Melted wax from a blessed candle, placed onto brown paper and positioned on the chest, is said to cure a cold on the chest.^{xlviii} Wake candles — candles which are used in the wake ceremony itself — broken up and tied with a cloth around one's head are deemed a cure for headaches.^{xlix} Wax has also been used to remove thorns, cure burns, warts, blisters, ring-worm and even the common cold.¹

The wax candle, in its own right, is the subject of much lore and legend in folk tradition. The way in which a candle burns can indicate whether luck or misfortune is bound for a household. If a candle is not seen to burn evenly when lighted on Christmas Eve or All Souls, it is said to be a sign of death.ⁱⁱ By contrast, on Hallowe'en, two lighted candles should be set over a fireplace, and if they are seen to burn clear, this is indicative of good luck for the future. However, if they smoke or splutter, bad luck will reign.ⁱⁱⁱ

Indeed, the bee, its honey and comb of wax are all credited with the ability, in folk tradition, of predicting the arrival of good and bad luck. The endowment of such a gift derives from their near sacred image which has thrived since early times. Bees are seen to share much of the magical ability possessed by the Saints who acted as their patrons. They are seen to protect and remain loyal to their master. Their ability to predict the arrival of luck or misfortune is indicative of the sacredness which adorns them. An underlying bond between bees and the mystical world is encapsulated in the many legends which describe their origin being from Paradise, from the tears of Jesus and the wounds of Job. The custom of 'Telling the Bees' of an important event originates from the possibility that there is an ingrained connection between the bees and the souls of the dead.^{liii} This belief derives from ancient Egypt, where bees are seen to take the form of the soul. Ransome reminds us that bees were in contact with the gods when supplying the sacred mead, and suggests that 'It may be that the bee was not regarded so much as a messenger between man and the gods, but as a form of the soul itself...'.^{liv}

The ability of the bee to construct a perfect hexagonal-shaped comb, as a foundation to breed, to work and produce, and to survive, is the only verification needed to proclaim this species as one of hyper-intelligence. Within their own community, they can communicate by dance, giving information of distances, locations and abundance of nearby food stores. Their intelligence is reflected in humankind's confidence and trust in their wisdom. Thus, we witness people relating to the bees proposed projects to be undertaken, and acting according to the behavioural pattern displayed by the bee. The reaction of the bee would indicate whether or not it was wise to continue with the plan.^{lv} More fantastically, we witness the bees outwitting the intelligence of Aristotle, leaving him in awe of their superb architecture and impressive honey production.

The absolute admiration, awe and respect held by bee-keepers for their bees, explains why this relationship has become embedded in folklore tradition in Ireland and elsewhere. Regardless of the unprecedented fecundity of this insect, the emotions bees have spurred surpass all. The following final anecdote, from 1854, encapsulates the beautiful relationship which can be achieved between a bee and its assistant:^{lvi}

A gentleman was staying at a friend's house and in the garden was a large beehive on the model of a house. One day his friend's niece (a child of nine years) was standing by him watching the busy throng in the hive; at last she said to him, 'What are these?' He answered her with some surprise, 'Bees'. 'No', she replied, 'we only call them so, they are fairies, or rather they are souls. If you had watched them as I have, you would not say that they were mere insects...'

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ⁱ The Commission, founded in 1935, is hereafter abbreviated to IFC.

ⁱⁱ Shakespeare, W., *King Henry the Fifth*, I, ii, lines 187-204.

ⁱⁱⁱ Charles-Edwards, T. & Kelly, F., *Bechbretha*, Dublin, 1983, p. 39; Anon., *The New Zealand Beekeeper*, Vol. 5, March 1998, p. 25.

^{iv} Gojmerac, W. L., *Bees, Bee-keeping, Honey and Pollination*, Connecticut, 1983, p. 10.

^v Charles-Edwards, T. & Kelly, F., *op cit.*, p. 40.

^{vi} IFC 947:109 (Cork, 1943).

^{vii} Mahon, Bríd, *Land of Milk and Honey*, Dublin, 1991, p. 82.

^{viii} *Ibid.*, p. 81; Watson, J. K., *Bee-Keeping in Ireland*, Dublin, Mount Salus Press, 1981, p. 2.

^{ix} Anon., *Ireland's Own*, 19 May 1978, p. 5.

^x IFC 1386:102 (Cork, 1954).

^{xi} *Ibid.*

^{xii} Herbert Valley, 'Telling the Bees', *British Bee Journal (BBJ)* 4233:309, 26 December 1970.

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^{xiii} *BBJ* 4259:301, 25 December 1971.

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- xiv IFC 1174:431 (Cork, 1949).
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- xvi Quoted in *BBJ* 4233:309, 26 December 1970
- xvii IFC 591:492 (Limerick, 1939), 782:253 (Kerry, 1941), 1386:102 (Cork, 1054).
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- xxviii Ó Catháin, *loc. cit.*
- xxix *Ireland's Own*, *op. cit.*
- xxx Ransome, Hilda, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
- xxxi IFC 947:54 (Kerry, 1943).
- xxxii IFC 1139:270 (Cork, 1940).
- xxxiii Ransome, Hilda. *op. cit.* p. 213.
- xxxiv Ransome, Hilda. *op. cit.* p. 213.
- xxxv IFC 789:312 (Cork, 1941).
- xxxvi M.C. Keniry, 'Cribbago', *An Beachaire*, May, 1976, p. 98.
- xxxvii Tadhg Gavin, 'Saint Bees, Friend of the Poor', *Ireland's Own*, 26 August 1977, p. 7.
- xxxviii Anon., 'Honey Harvest Festival', *BBJ* 4175:223, 5 October 1968, p. 233.
- xxxix IFC 204:55 (Kerry, 1932).
- xl IFC 1234:447 (Tipperary, 1952).
- xli IFC 306:482-6 (Cork, 1036).
- xlii Watson, J. K., *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- xliii Ransome, H., *op. cit.*, p. 190.
- xliv Extracted from a study carried out in Wicklow, completed by a student in the Irish Folklore Department, entitled 'Folk Medicine' (IFC Archive, Box 5).
- xlv Reader's contribution, *BBJ*, 4236:31, 6 February 1971, p. 31.
- xlvi Ó Catháin, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
- xlvii Ransome, H., *op. cit.*, p. 196.
- xlviii IFC 1879:146 (Ballinacor, 1933).
- xliv *Irish Press*, Roddy the Rover 'Traditional Cures Competition', 1933 (IFC Archive, Box 63).
- l *Ibid.*
- ii IFC 42:147 (Cork, 1928).
- iii S.C. (IFC School's Collection) 15:176 (Roscommon, 1938).
- iiii Ransome, H. *op. cit.*, p. 218.
- lv *Ibid.*, p. 219.
- lv Information collected by Seán Ó Súilleabháin, a full-time collector of the IFC.
- lvi *Notes and Queries*, 10, 1854, p. 500. The writer signs himself 'Eirionnach'. Reprinted in *BBJ* 4162:77 (6 April 1968).