



Eva Crane Trust

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International Appeal – The Director's speech

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INAUGURATION OF THE BEE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL APPEAL

The Appeal was inaugurated on 20th April in the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers in London*. Those who attended include : Mr. W. G. Alexander, Agricultural Research Council; Mr. F. S. O. Broughton, Secretary of the Development Commission; Dr. C. G. Butler, Head of Bee Department, Rothamsted Experimental Station; Dr. R. K. Callow, Medical Research Council; Mr. T. Kingsley Collett, Master of the Distillers' Company; Major A. R. Cormack, Chairman of B.R.A. Council; Mr. S. Wingfield Digby, M.P.; Sir William Gavin, Hon. Treasurer of the Appeal; Sir Anthony Hurd, M.P.; Sir Shane Leslie; Sir Thomas Neame, Royal Agricultural Society; Mr. C. P. Norbury, National Farmers' Union; Mr. E. O. Pearson, Director of the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology; Mr. C. Kemal Reheem, Chairman of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux; Sir Edward Salisbury; Mr. A. Simmonds, Royal Horticultural Society; Dr. G. H. L. Dicker, East Malling Research Station; Dr. H. G. Vevers, Zoological Society; Dr. E. M. Widdowson, Medical Research Council. In addition to other scientists and beekeepers, there were also diplomats and government representatives from many countries, and Press representatives. A display showing some of the work of the B.R.A. had been set up, and guests were also able to see examples of early beekeeping equipment from the Association's Museum, and of apparatus recently devised for bee research, from Rothamsted Experimental Station.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

The President of the Association, the Hon. Sir David Bowes Lyon, K.C.V.O., an uncle of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, formally inaugurated the International Appeal in the following words.

First of all I would like to introduce to you our Chairman, Major Cormack, who is also Honorary Secretary of the Association and who does an immense amount of work for it, Sir William Gavin, the Honorary Treasurer of this International Appeal, whose name is, I am sure, familiar to all of you for his long and distinguished career in agriculture in many forms, and — last, but not least — Dr. Eva Crane, our Director.

I would like to welcome you all this morning to our gathering here. This is an important occasion in the advancement of science. The Bee Research Association exists to promote the study of the honeybee and other bees of value to man, and in this distinct field it acts as the clearing house of information and knowledge for scientists all over the world. When, for instance, a research worker in Formosa or Detroit — or Manchester or

* Details of the Appeal were given in *April Bee World* (page 85); an article on the Wax Chandlers' Company appeared in the March issue (page 63).

Zanzibar — wants to know the present state of knowledge on some aspect of bee research, he writes to our Director, Dr. Eva Crane, and she gives him the information. But, I may say, he will be lucky if he escapes without having to do some work in return which Dr. Crane has thought up for him. And the remarkable thing is that everybody is quite happy, and even enthusiastic, about this arrangement. No country in the world, not even the United States or the Soviet Union, wants to substitute an organization of its own. The Bee Research Association is quite unique; it has no rival and, indeed, no competitor.

'The Association started in an interesting way. A few enthusiasts, twelve years ago, saw that there was a job that needed doing. No one else was doing it, so they got together and formed the Association. As you probably know, the Commonwealth recognized that information centres were needed in all branches of agriculture, and a number were established in 1929, but somehow the bee was left out. A Bureau of Entomology was set up to deal with insects as pests, but the honeybee was regarded as a "domestic animal" and was specifically left out. As we know, the bee has since then suffered considerably because it has not been immune from science, which has been dealing with pests in other directions. As a result of all this, the friends of the honeybee formed a voluntary bureau of their own. But later both our Government and Commonwealth Governments modified their attitude: they were sufficiently impressed by the importance of the work which the Association was doing that from 1956 onwards they have been helping with small grants. But these grants, which are towards part of the Association's running expenses, are quite insufficient to do what needs doing — and this is nothing very grandiose — to set up the Association with a small headquarters of its own, and to provide Dr. Crane, often frustrated as she has been to make ends meet on a tiny subscription income, with a basic minimum staff of her own, and to provide the proper facilities which are needed.

'We want to see this world centre put on a secure and a permanent basis. Promises of support have been made by many of the seventy-six countries which are associated with the Association, and many of them are going to have their own separate appeals, but today our concern is to see that everybody in this country, directly or indirectly interested, understands the importance of this Appeal and will do their best to help. And I believe we are all, not only indirectly, but directly interested in the bee, because what we eat, and indeed what we drink, very largely depends on the work of the bee itself, so we cannot pretend to ignore its importance.

'We are gathered together today here in this delightful Hall of the Wax Chandlers' Company, and we are indeed grateful to them for having allowed us to meet here. When this Company first started its long life, in the Middle Ages, it had a very important function, to make the best use of the products of the bee. It was honey and beeswax which were then of cardinal importance in the economy of these islands, because on honey and on beeswax depended the sugar and the lighting of the whole country.

'Now, with increasing scientific knowledge, we have all learnt the importance of the bee in the pollination of plants and fruits, in producing seeds and other products which make the wheels of the economy go round. I am specially interested in horticulture, and agriculture too, and I feel that all of us should do our best to foster the life of that admirable domestic animal which is called the bee.

'If this had been a dinner instead of a pre-luncheon meeting, I would have been delighted to propose the toast of "The Honeybee — The Friend of Man" — because there is no question that it is probably one of the best friends we have ever had, and we should do all we can to cherish it — coupled with the name of "The Bee Research Association".'

THE DIRECTOR'S SPEECH

The President then called up Dr. Eva Crane, Director of the Association, to give a short address on the Association's work.

'The President has explained why this Association is appealing for funds now, and I want, if I may, to fill in the background a little.



Fig. 1. Sir David Bowes Lyon, the President, and Dr. Eva Crane, the Director, examining a wicker hive, one of the earliest types used in Britain. Some of the silver belonging to the Wax Chandlers' Company can be seen in the background, including (at the top) the famous Normansell cup.

'As most of you know very well, the honeybee produces nearly all the world's honey and beeswax, and — because of its so-called domestication — it is also a valuable pollinator of fruit and seed crops. It also

provides various other substances which have interesting properties in pharmacology and nutrition: pollen, propolis, bee venom, royal jelly and queen substance, whose constitution we were able to announce in our journal *Bee World* last June.



Fig. 2. The President's speech. On the wall is one of the Charters of the Wax Chandlers' Company.

'The honeybee belongs to the Old World, to Europe, Asia and Africa. Until after 1500 there were no honeybees in the New World, in the Americas, Australia or New Zealand. But, like the dog, the honeybee has accompanied man on most of his major migrations, and the early settlers in the New World established skeps of bees in their new colonies. The interesting thing is that the bees thrive very well in the New World, often better than in their native country, and even today there is better bee forage in the New World than in the Old. As examples of this: the world's biggest bee business is in Mexico, the largest honey-producing country in the

world is the United States, and the highest individual honey harvests are got in Australia.

'So the present position is that the honeybee has spread, either with or without man's aid, to virtually every country in the world, and in each of these countries it is actually, or at any rate potentially, useful. The results of bee research, and of advances in bee breeding and beekeeping, are thus of significance for all these countries.

'We ourselves are in touch with about four hundred institutes in different countries, and the results of their research come to us in forty-four different languages. This is the material we handle, and which we send out again, in a more usable form, to some eighty countries. We are very grateful indeed to the two hundred or more scientists and linguists in these different countries who give us so much voluntary professional help. When we started to publish an abstract journal in 1950 we were also fortunate in getting immediate official co-operation from the United States Department of Agriculture, and other Governments were then soon ready to follow suit.

'There is another reason why we value this wide co-operation so much. The scientific study of bees impinges on so many different sciences: chemistry because of the different bee products, physics because of the bee's curious method of orientation by polarized light, botany because all the bees' food comes from plants, the various branches of medicine in which bee products are tried and used, and of course biochemistry, physiology and anatomy in the study of the bees themselves.

'So both linguistically and scientifically we have to cast our net wide. We must do this geographically also: the whole world is a big parish to cope with, but we should inevitably lose if we restricted our work to a smaller area, because all over the world beekeeping is concerned with only two species of honeybee, and these are very similar indeed. So a discovery made in one country may be taken up in another country many thousands of miles away. For instance, work on red clover pollination in Sweden may prove to be of economic value here in Britain, or in Australia, or Russia, or Pakistan.

'One of the things which makes this world-wide operation a very happy affair is the great extent to which we are able to work independently of political restrictions. A few years ago when I was in Austria, I happened to visit an apiary a few yards from the Iron Curtain, beyond which lay Hungary. I watched the bees flying to and fro across the barbed wire that formed the boundary, and they, of course, did not understand that it was a boundary. I thought then how very fortunate we were in the Bee Research Association, in that we are almost as independent of political barriers ourselves: we are working constructively and effectively with America and Russia, with Israel and Egypt, with Communist China and Formosa. And I hope that these positive contacts, in their own very small way, may perhaps be of some value to the world in its divided state today.

'In closing, I must try to answer the question some of you may be asking yourselves: why, with this world-wide system already established, and all this professional help available, cannot we just continue as we have been doing? Why are we now appealing for money? The answer is this. As Sir David has explained, *we must have established headquarters to operate from, and a small permanent staff.* We are at the moment entirely dependent on the health, circumstances and generosity of a few individuals,

and we have no security whatever for the future. The very success of our work has outrun our present resources, and placed our future in jeopardy. We are now asking for the tools to do the job, properly and on a permanent basis.



Fig. 3. The Director's speech. Sir William Gavin, the Hon. Treasurer of the Appeal, is on the left of the photograph. On the table in front of Major Cormack, Chairman of Council, is the Roll of Benefactors in which names of those contributing to the Appeal will be inscribed.

'I should like to say here how very grateful we are to Sir William Gavin for taking on the office of Honorary Treasurer of this Appeal. As you see, the burden appears to sit very lightly on his shoulders, but I can assure you that to him the office is no mere formality.

'The new Centre will be here in Britain; there is no disagreement about this. Seven hundred years ago, in this very same place where we are meeting today, a group of Englishmen founded the Wax Chandlers'

Company — I will quote their own words — "for the benefit and advantage" of "the Art and Mystery" of the honey and beeswax trade in the City of London "or within ten miles of same". We are very grateful indeed to this Worshipful Company for allowing us — seven centuries later, but in the very same place — to inaugurate our much wider venture: an International Appeal to establish a Centre "for the benefit and advantage" of bee research and beekeeping in the whole world.'

CONCLUSION

After a vote of thanks by the Chairman of Council, Major A. R. Cormack, the President closed the official proceedings, and these were followed by a Press conference.

SPECIAL APPEAL TO BEE WORLD READERS

Please contribute all you can to this International Appeal, and do all in your power to bring the Appeal to the notice of appropriate Government departments, and of suitable business firms and other organizations, in your own country. Donations should be sent to Sir William Gavin, C.B.E., Hon. Treasurer, B.R.A. International Appeal, 678 Salisbury House, London Wall, London, E.C.2, England. Details of the Association, and copies of the Appeal Leaflet *The Honeybee in the Service of Man*, can be obtained from the same address.