



Eva Crane Trust

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TITLE: Winter bee houses

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Winter Bee Houses

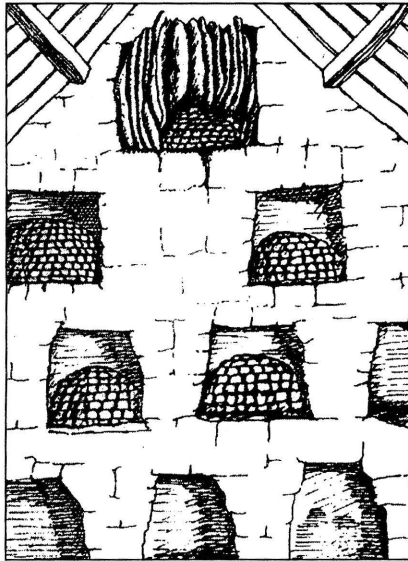
The YVBSG Annual Report 1996 featured an article entitled 'Bee Boles in Yorkshire' by Penelope Walker. She and Dr Eva Crane, who are in charge of the International Bee Research Association Register of Bee Boles, now write about another type of structure used for bees.

In a winter bee house one or more of the inside walls had recesses for individual skeps (hives). It was usually an outbuilding and had no windows; bees overwintered there were at an equable temperature and in the dark, so they needed a minimum amount of food and did not fly out of the hive.

Thirty such winter bee houses have been found in various parts of Britain, for instance in Cornwall as in the drawing below; also some cellars contain recesses for skeps. Sometimes there are outdoor bee boles at the same place. The IBRA Register has records for two winter bee houses in Yorkshire: one was at Goathland (but is in ruins), and the other is a building with six recesses in a garden at Stonegrave near Helmsley.

We should be most grateful if any readers who know of outbuildings (or cellars) with these recesses would write to us about them. The recesses are likely to be at least twelve inches high, wide and deep, and may be in one, two or three tiers.

Eva Crane (Dr)



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