

Famous Beekeepers

Compiled by Glenbo



Aristotle 384-322 BC

Aristotle was very passionate about apiculture and honey bees, and worked closely together with countless beekeepers. In fact, he made several theories about the behavior and even the origin of bees. For example, he thought bees came from the flowers of brooms, reeds, and olives! While this may sound ridiculous to us (and it is a bit ridiculous), the reason why he believed this is quite interesting. First, he noticed that every time there was a large harvest of olives there were also significantly more bees swarming. This led him to believe that bees spontaneously generate from flowers. He also maintained that 1) Masculine creatures are armed with strong weapons; 2) Worker bees have stingers; 3) Therefore, worker bees are males. The idea stuck for 2,000 years.

But many of his other observations were more accurate. He noticed that the more the flower thyme bloomed, the better the honey yield beekeepers could expect, which allowed Aristotle to forecast honey yields.

Morgan Freeman

Morgan Freeman began beekeeping in 2014 and he feels a deep connection with his honey bees. His home ranch in Mississippi now houses 26 hives, and he passionately promotes environmental preservation, and does his part to combat the local decline of pollinators. To quote Morgan: *'There's a concerted effort to bring bees back onto the planet. We do not realize that they are the foundation, I think, of the growth of the planet, the vegetation...'*



Sherlock Holmes AROUND 1880-1914

Sir Conan Doyle, the author of the Sherlock Holmes series, is an avid bee enthusiast. Many fans of Sherlock Holmes know that a few years after Doyle attempted to kill Holmes at the Reichenback Falls, Doyle instead decided to send Holmes into retirement in Sussex where he would spend the rest of his days as a beekeeper. It's rather easy to envision Holmes conducting more than a few experiments on his beloved bees, but we are certain that they are experiments to help the bees.

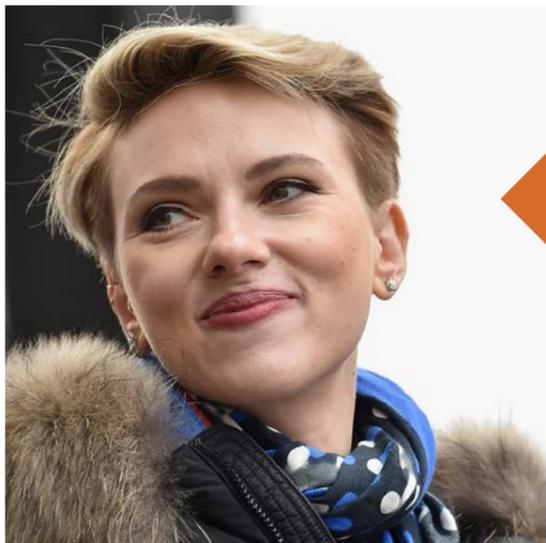


Henry Fonda 1905-1982 AND Peter Fonda

Henry was an amateur beekeeper who supplied his friends with jars labelled *'Henry's Honey.'* His son Peter (left) played a beekeeper in the 1997 movie *'Ulee's Gold'* - harvesting the famous *Tupelo* honey.

Napoleon Bonaparte 1769-1821

Napoleon Bonaparte's symbol/emblem of cultural growth was the *'Golden Honey Bee.'* He respected bees as they were orderly, efficient, and worked without question for the good of the colony.



Scarlett Johansson

Actor Samuel Jackson got Scarlett Johansson and her husband, Ryan Reynolds, a beehive as a wedding present. She is also a huge fan of Medicinal Honey.

George Washington 1732-1799

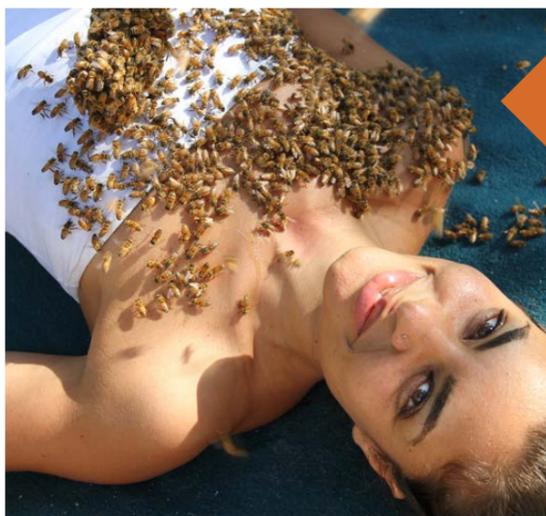
In 1787, President Washington had an apiary constructed on the Mount Vernon property that he had inherited. Today, a replica sits in the place of the beehives on the ground.

President Washington's hives, along with many of the beehives in the southern states in the late 1700s, were made out of black gum from trees. The reason for this was because the heartwood decays quickly, which leaves a hollow trunk that is perfect as a beehive. These black gum beehives became known as *'gums,'* which is why the word is now used generally for any hive.



Sir Edmund Hillary 1919-2008

With his brother Rex, Sir Edmund Hillary became a beekeeper, a summer occupation that allowed him to pursue climbing in the winter. His interest in beekeeping later led Hillary to commission Michael Ayrton to cast a golden sculpture in the shape of honeycomb in imitation of Daedalus's lost-wax process. This was placed in his New Zealand garden, where his bees took it over as a hive and *'filled it with honey and their young.'*



Maryam Henein

An investigative journalist, film producer and writer, Maryam is co-director of *'The Vanishing of the Bees.'* She has dedicated her life to drawing parallels between autoimmune sufferers and honeybees as she believes both are environmental indicators.

Leonardo Di Caprio

Leonardo took up beekeeping to handle stress before the Oscars in 2016. He was introduced to the hobby by his mother's boyfriend David Ward as a means to deal with stress before the Oscars, and this hobby continues to help him *'chill out.'*



Matt Damon

Damon learnt the art of beekeeping from his grandfather as a child, and although nowadays his busy lifestyle means he doesn't always get to tend to his bees personally, he employs a full-time beekeeper at his home in Florida and often gives gifts of fresh honey to friends and relatives.

Flea

The Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist is loving every moment working his 3 honey bee hives in his backyard. The reason: *'no bees = no bee pollination = a lot less food!'* He posts lots of pictures of himself tending bees on social media.



Maria von Trapp 1905-1987

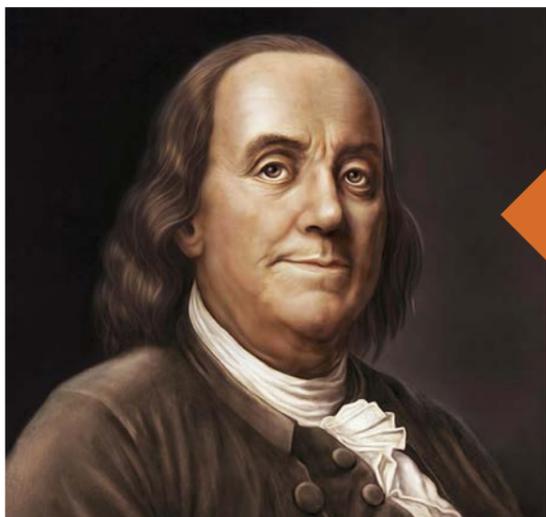
After singing the praises of the hills of the Austria, Maria von Trapp and family moved to Vermont USA in 1939 and she took up the practice of beekeeping on the site of the musical camp they built.

Martha Stewart

The undisputed *Queen of Homemaking* on television, Martha is an avid blogger, and has created many current and entertaining bee blogs. Beekeeping, as Martha puts it, has *'something so romantic'* about it that she was simply compelled to own her own hives

Michelle Obama

The ex-First Lady set an example for the USA by banning bee-killing pesticides from the White House gardens and urging the EPA and Congress to take swift action to protect bees and other pollinators. The first-ever White House beehives have been installed.



Benjamin Franklin 1706-1790

Legend has it that Benjamin Franklin briefly became passionate about beekeeping. As for many beginner beekeepers, he was not fond of the idea of getting stung by a bee and, back in the 18th Century, getting stung was almost certain for beekeepers as bee suits were not widely used.

So Benjamin went to the drawing board and began to develop a piece of equipment that would forever change beekeeping – **THE CROTCHLESS BEE SUIT.**

Crotchless? Apparently, Mr. Franklin suffered from massive bladder stones in the years leading up to his death in 1790. Perhaps because of this (and perhaps not), he designed his bee suit to allow for quick urination whenever the need arose. What he may not have expected, however, is that after the first time he used it a beelanded on his... well, you get the point. After this rather uncomfortable experience, Benjamin forgot about the bee suit and instead invented the first medical catheter. In Benjamin's own words:

'Tart words make no friends; a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a gallon of vinegar.'

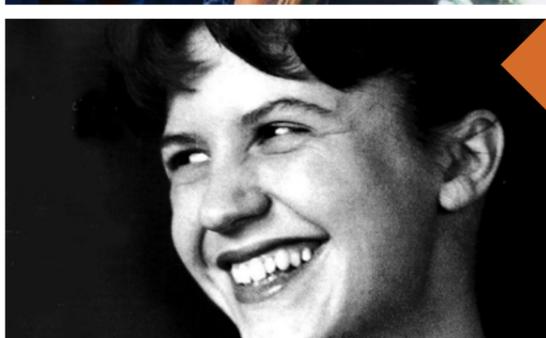
Sting

Sadly, he's not a beekeeper! Gordon Sumner received his stage name, Sting, during college from a band mate who believed Sumner resembled a bee from often wearing a black and yellow sweater. The former lead singer of the band 'Police' is now the Patron of the beekeeping charity, Bees for Development.



Sylvia Plath 1932-1963

A famous poet of the mid 20th Century and an avid beekeeper in her last years, she wrote a series of powerful poems about bees, and *'it is the power of the poems to recover the intensity of our first experiences with the bees, the imaginative grasp she has of the special relationship which beekeepers have with each other (at the meetings she attended), her delicate and accurate attention to colour, form, sound, smell, which make them unique in all the literature about bees.'*





Sir Winston Churchill 1874-1965

A beekeeper known for bringing his own smoker!

In Britain, during WWII, Winston Churchill—himself a beekeeper and a staunch supporter of bees—made sure all beekeepers could claim extra sugar rations of 10lbs per colony, to enable them to feed the bees and carry on with their vital pollination work, even as bombs were dropped all around them.

Churchill became increasingly concerned about the effects of agricultural pesticides on the population of bees, and was active in the understanding and controlling of bee diseases. He was accredited with putting in place the first Foul Brood Inspectors, in an effort to get the epidemic under control.

Steve Vai

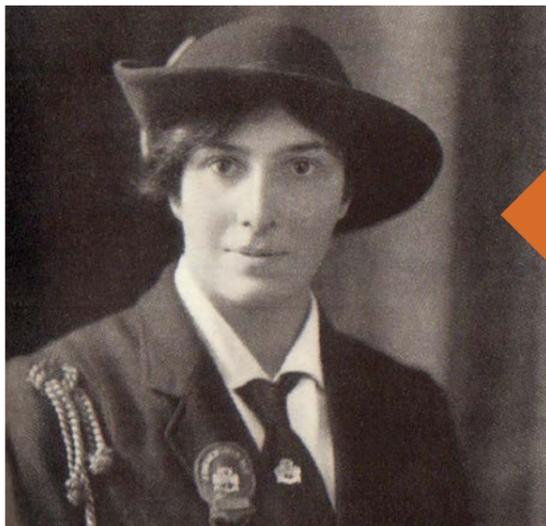
Steve Vai is best known for his guitar work and associations with artists and bands like Frank Zappa, David Lee Roth and Whitesnake. In addition to rocking out on his guitar, Steve has found peace in a more grounded lifestyle which includes a love of beekeeping, and is known for tending bee hives and harvesting honey.

Apparently Vai harvests the honey for friends and produces a special crop of honey to help raise funds for his 'Make a Noise' Foundation. The charity is focused on providing music education for underprivileged youth. He is also an honorary member of the British Beekeepers Association.

Kate Middleton

No, not a beekeeper, but having a young baby can be hard work, yet she *'shows no sign of sleepless nights with her glossy flowing locks and radiant skin'* (unquote) - so what's her secret?

The Duchess of Cambridge has used bee venom to keep her skin looking flawless and even applied the secret ingredient to ensure a glowing complexion when she wed Prince William in 2011. There you go!



Agnes Baden-Powell 1858-1945

The younger sister of Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts, Agnes was a keen beekeeper, producing prizewinning honey while helping her brother organise the early Girl Guide movement.

However, she may not have agreed with all his pronouncements on the subject. In his famous bestseller *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell wrote of his admiration for bees, saying: *'They are quite a model community, for they respect their Queen and kill their unemployed.'* In later editions, this politically incorrect comment was changed to *'...those who won't work.'*



Thomas Jefferson 1743-1826

Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, was a man of wide and varied interests. He was a farmer, a reader, an agrarian, a musician, a lawyer and also noted as a beekeeper. In fact, drawings made by Jefferson of his Monticello estate depict bee houses on both the north and south of his property. Mr. Jefferson also recorded some historical observations about bees in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

Thomas Edison 1847-1931

Thomas Edison is famous for his thousands of inventions, including the light bulb – but he's not famous for beekeeping. Nonetheless, his estate in Fort Myers, Florida, has kept and continues to keep bees in order to pollinate the numerous flowers on the property.

Although this does not necessarily confirm that Thomas Edison was a beekeeper, there's a good chance he studied them due to his curious nature.



Suggs

The lead singer of *Madness* took up beekeeping but gave up the hobby when all his bees died. However, he continues to support the rapidly growing urban beekeeping movement in his native London. Another single-monikered beekeeping rock star is Bez of Happy Mondays, who finds it *'a great soothing, calming, restful thing to do.'*

Jon Bon Jovi

Yet another guitar rocker that dons a veil in his down-time.

Phill Jupitus

Phill Jupitus is an English stand-up and improv comedian, presenter, disc jockey, radio personality, cartoonist, guitarist, actor, performance poet, musician, podcaster, screenwriter...

...oh, and beekeeper!





Lionel Richie

Well, to be honest, it's his daughter Nicole who was inspired to acquire and place the hives on her Dad's property. 'You are forever going to have free personalised honey,' Nicole told Lionel, holding up a jar with a label reading 'Hello. Is it bee you're looking for?' No-one really knows what Lionel thought.

Pope Francis

Coinciding with his nature, the Patron Saint of Animals, Pope Francis owns several hives on his Vatican farm at Castel Gandolfo. The farm has been earmarked as the Pope's summer residence since the 16th century. The papal bees aid in the pollination of 800-year-old olive trees and vegetable gardens in the self-sustaining farm.

Pythagoras 570-495 BC

Ancient Greek mathematician and cult founder, when he wasn't playing with triangles ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$) he was keeping bees, and contributed his long life to the constant use of honey.

Leo Tolstoy 1828-1910

This Russian author was a beekeeper. His wife, Sonja, talked about him 'crouching in front of his hives, net over his head.' And she wrote in her diary, 'The apiary has become the centre of the world for him now, and everybody has to be interested exclusively in Bees!' Tolstoy mentions beekeeping twice in War and Peace (it's a long book, you'd expect beekeeping to come up, wouldn't you?) Tolstoy describes the evacuation of Moscow: 'Moscow was empty. It was deserted as a dying, queenless hive is deserted.'

'One can no more approach people without love than one can approach bees without care. Such is the quality of bees...' – Tolstoy.

Winnie the Pooh

Winnie – an observer of beekeepers (from a-far) and a lover of hunny (from a-close). And why does Pooh like it so much? Well, he's a bear and 'bears are known for eating hunny. Besides, who doesn't love hunny?'

Langstroth 1810-1895

In 1851, this minister discovered the practical use of Bee-Space and designed the beehive as we commonly know it. Langstroth is credited with discovering 'bee space' – an idea that led to his design of freely hanging frames. His 1853 book 'The Hive and the Honey Bee' is brilliantly written, and is the first descriptive treatise of modern bee management.

Prodigious Gympie Duplet

The world knows many famous duos – Caesar and Cleopatra, Bonnie and Clyde, Lennon and McCartney, Holmes and Watson, Tom and Jerry, HanSolo and Chewbacca, Laurel and Hardy, Mulder and Scully...but none so famed as right here in our Mary Valley: the BeeKeePingPair of Tom and Athol.

This TAB (Two Admired Beekeepers) remains an inspiration to us all.

Brother Adam 1898-1996

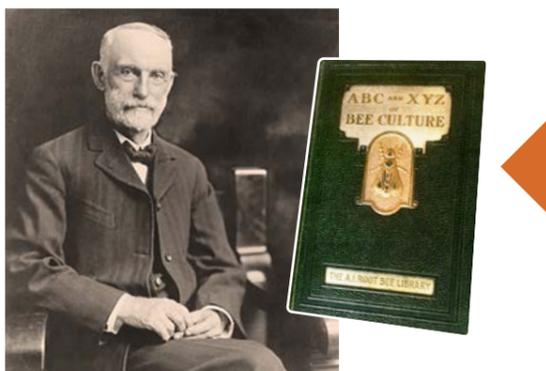
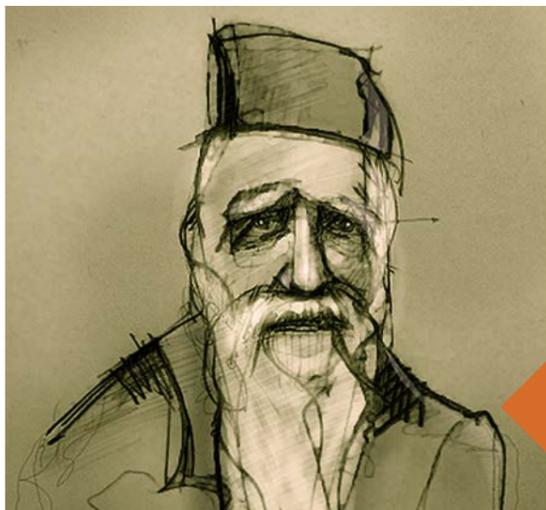
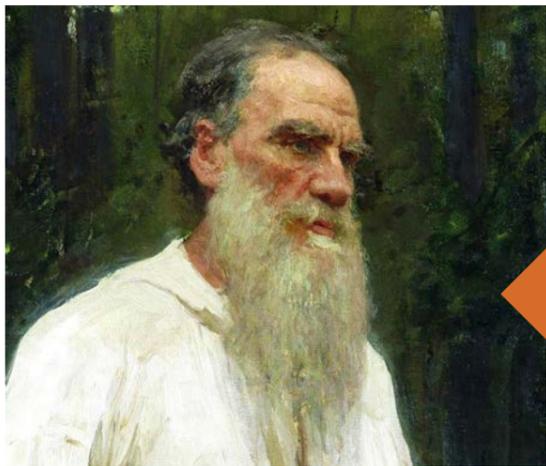
Originally known as Karl Kehrle, Brother Adam was the Benedictine monk who developed the famous Buckfast Bee, and became the leader of a short-lived beekeeping cult movement. He arrived at the Buckfast Catholic monastery when he was 11 years old. He spent the rest of his life there. He was considered one of the most talented of all queen breeders – when he died in 1996, the Economist magazine wrote, 'He was unsurpassed as a breeder of bees. He talked to them, he stroked them. He brought to the hives a calmness that, according to those who saw him at work, the sensitive bees responded to.'

Charles Dadant 1817-1902

Progressive beekeeper founded Dadant & Sons, a beekeeping business now entering its seventh generation of family management. Charles Dadant emigrated from France at age 46. He had a big family and no money but worked his way into nine hives of bees in Illinois which grew to thousands. Along the way, he founded a bee supply factory and became a well-known beekeeping author and publisher.

Amos Ives Root 1839-1923

A. I. Root was an entrepreneur who developed innovative techniques for beekeeping during the latter 19th century, a period when the practice played an important role in the economy of many communities. He went on in 1879 to publish 'The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture' which is still successfully in publication.





Emily Dickinson 1830-1886

Historical evidence shows Emily Dickinson's garden was a vast bee and butterfly utopia. Historical evidence shows Emily Dickinson's Garden contained an abundance of blooming flowers. Archaeologists recently uncovered portions of a pathway leading to nineteenth-century flower and vegetable beds.

Emily Dickinson's niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, remembered 'carpets of lily-of-the-valley and pansies, platoons of sweetpeas, hyacinths, enough in May to give all the bees of summer dyspepsia. There were ribbons of peony hedges and drifts of daffodils in season, marigolds to distraction — ...utopia.'

The Bee ~ By Emily Dickinson

Like trains of cars on tracks of plush
I hear the level bee:
A jar across the flowers goes,
Their velvet masonry
Withstands until the sweet assault
Their chivalry consumes,
While he, victorious, tilts away
To vanquish other blooms.
His feet are shod with gauze,
His helmet is of gold;
His breast, a single onyx
With chrysoprase, inlaid.
His labor is a chant,
His idleness a tune;
Oh, for a bee's experience
Of clovers and of noon!

Bee! I'm expecting you!

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying Yesterday
To Somebody you know
That you were due—
The Frogs got Home last Week—
Are settled, and at work—
Birds, mostly back—
The Clover warm and thick—
You'll get my Letter by
The seventeenth; Reply
Or better, be with me—
Yours, Fly.

~ By Emily Dickinson



Lady Lamb

Lady Lamb, a contemporary American singer/songwriter, was born Aly Spaltro, but originally changed her stage name to *Lady Lamb the Beekeeper*, a name which came to her 'in a dream.' *Honey I'm Home* is her recent *Buzz-Session Series*, recorded live and made by *The Wild Honey Pie*. Check it out.

<http://www.thewildhoneypie.com/lady-lamb-the-beekeeper-lakefront-sessions/>



Father Bob

Robert John Thomas 'Bob' Maguire is a Roman Catholic priest, community worker and media personality from South Melbourne. Commonly known as Father Bob, Maguire was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1989 'for service to homeless youth through the Open Family Foundation'. In his younger days he used to be a beekeeper, which he describes as 'one of the finest periods of my life'.

Daniel David Palmer

Daniel David Palmer or D.D. Palmer was the founder of chiropractic. Palmer was born in Pickering, Canada and in 1865 moved to the United States, and took up magnetic healing.



Bill Dennison

This former Mayor of Toronto and beekeeper had bees before his election. He kept them in the heart of the city. Whenever there was a stray swarm, the police would call His Majesty the Mayor. Dennison would get his veil and go fetch the bees – not every city of 3 million can claim such hands-on care from an elected official!



Yuri Luzhkov

Yuri Luzhkov, Mayor of Moscow and a passionate beekeeper. His 18-year rule ended after a Kremlin campaign accused him of caring more for his bee collection than the city's people.

Rudolf Steiner

In 1923 Rudolf Steiner predicted the dire state of today's honeybee. He stated that, within fifty to eighty years, we would see the consequences of mechanizing the forces that had previously operated organically in the beehive. Such practices include breeding queen bees artificially.

Steiner began a (now famous) series of lectures on bees. From physical depictions of the daily activities of bees to the most elevated esoteric insights, these lectures describe the unconscious wisdom of the beehive and its connection to our experience of health, culture, and the cosmos.

