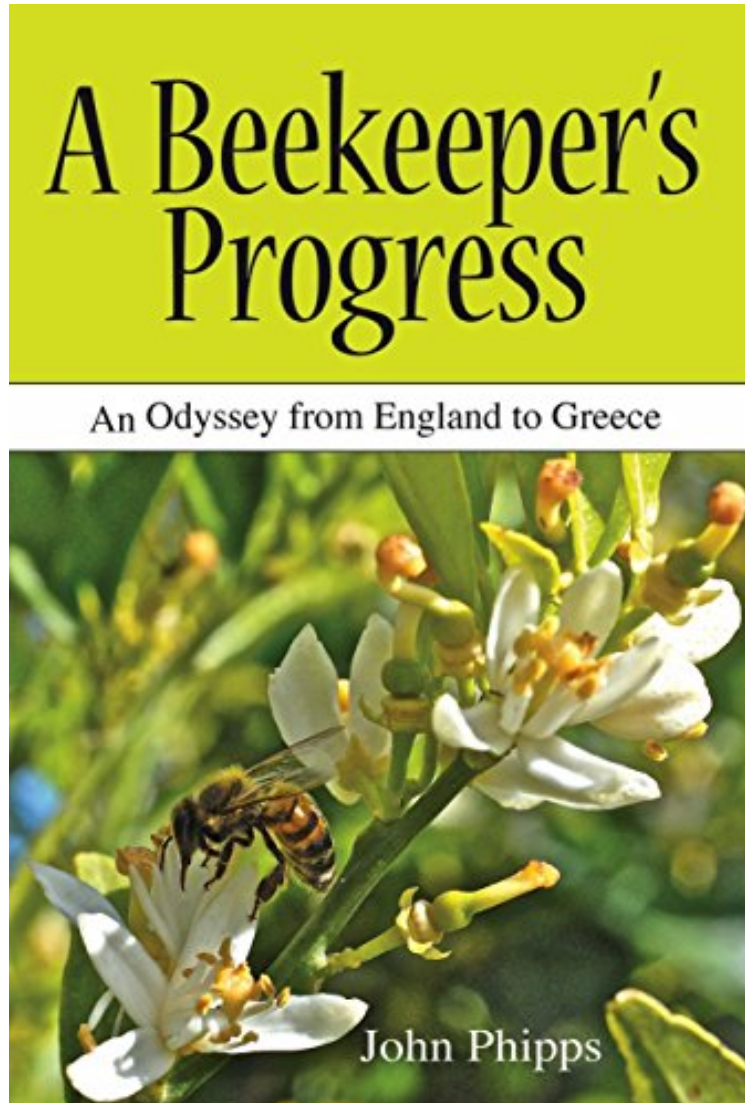


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## A Beekeeper's Progress: An Odyssey from England to Greece

*John Phipps*

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**John Phipps : A Beekeeper's Progress: An Odyssey from England to Greece** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Beekeeper's Progress: An Odyssey from England to Greece:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A treasure chest of beekeeping experiencesBy Dr. Leonid SharashkinThis book is like a treasure chest full of gems. The narrative is interspersed with touching, hilarious, funny, and always relevant stories. Schoolgirls making cosmetics with bee products in the author's class and then unable to wash it off for days... A farmer catching rats in mugs which he then uses to offer tea to his workers... A cave monk

stealing honey from the hives at night... Transporting a stack of hives full of bees on the roof rack of a car... And much, much more. The narrative is excellent - very readable, well-edited prose. Its richness of detail literally transports you to the times and places described. I especially liked the author's masterful description of smells - which give the book a very enjoyable olfactory dimension (e.g., describing a country store where he picked up his first beekeeping catalog: "As always there were the delicious country scents of creosote, tarred rope and musty hessian sacking."). The apicultural contents are excellent, too - and many quite rare. Editor of a major beekeeping magazine for over 25 years (with correspondents the world over), and with his 40 plus years of beekeeping experience, the author has a truly unique range of knowledge of beekeeping in different countries, climates, and social and cultural contexts (including England, France, Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Ukraine, etc.) - and it shines throughout this volume. It effortlessly expanded my knowledge of many areas of beekeeping (e.g., the text references a dozen different hive designs); and I got many pointers for further research. For example, I'm going to read more on Beowulf Cooper's work (his personality comes to life in the book) - a prominent advocate of preserving local bee strains. Apitherapy chapter and the author's personal story of permanently curing an aching knee with just three bee stings made me want to read more on that topic. The business chapter had some very valuable business advice as you learn from the author's successes and failures. The richness and diversity of beekeeping practices he describes is quite in contrast with the mainstream beekeeping scene in the U.S. (think beekeeper monks at Mouth Athos or nuclear scientist keeping bees in an old freezer). And I did not know that the practice of sleeping on hives was known outside Russia and Ukraine - but yes it is there in this book! The human dimension Mr Phipps gives to the narrative is wonderful and quite unusual for apicultural literature. You get to know him, his family, and his many colleagues very well through the pages of this memoir. His personal story goes against the backdrop of disappearing country lifestyles and simple rural traditions, and while the author is not judgmental about it, the book makes you ponder the course of the civilization at large. "A Beekeeper's Progress" covers so much ground that it could benefit from an Index (there's none); and the many black-and-white photographs, albeit high-quality, are quite small. But even with these minor points, it still deserves a 5-star rating.

From his first hive to fifty of them, from a fascinating hobby to a business venture, John Phipps has worked with honey and bees all his life. As editor of the foremost beekeeping magazine in Britain, John has travelled internationally to meet some of the most innovative beekeepers in Europe and Asia, to see at first hand the many different ways they gather their honey and manage their hives. This is his fascinating account of 40 years' experience with bees, a passion which has taken him from East Anglia to his current home and hives in Greece. \* Practical advice for beginners and experts interwoven through the story \* An international perspective on beekeeping \* A human story for anyone interested in country living \* John Phipps is founding editor of The Beekeeper's Annual and The Beekeepers Quarterly

About the Author Teacher in the East of England, Phipps has now moved to Greece where he keeps bees today. He is the editor of the Beekeepers Quarterly and Beekeepers Annual and an expert in beekeeping practices around the world. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Mr Cranidge (it was always Mr Cranidge and Mr Phipps -- formal, yet friendly) let me keep the Apidictor and whilst it was too late to predict swarms we had great fun with it the following year when we connected it to the classroom observation hive. I never used it as a swarm predictor. I used the time-honoured way of simply tapping the side of the hive and listening for the volume and duration of the hiss emitted by the bees. I received another interesting present from Mr Cranidge. It was an original Catenary Hive. The County Bee Instructor for Yorkshire, Bill Bielby, had developed this hive as a more natural home for bees. He said, quite rightly, that when bees build nests in the wild, the combs take on a catenary shape; that is the shape you get when you hold a long piece of string loosely between outstretched hands. He made the hive by bending a very thin piece of marine ply to the required shape and fastening it to the sides of vertical pieces of exterior ply. Instead of using standard frames, the bees were just given top bars at the normal spacing to which had been added strips of wax foundation. The bees built enormous combs in this hive which needed careful handling. The boxes for honey were placed as normal on top of the catenary-shaped brood box, but again, just starter strips of bees wax were put in the top bars. Bill developed this system for people who wished to keep bees but didn't want the expense of conventional beekeeping. When it came to extracting honey he showed that by cutting out the combs and hanging them up in a bag of muslin they could be compressed and strained without any additional equipment. Undoubtedly, Bill Bielby was the first beekeeping advisor who was concerned that the craft could be carried out in the simplest way possible and with the least expense. He was the fore-runner of those who today promote sustainable beekeeping.