



Next meeting | Wednesday 4th December 2019

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

Editor | Eva Durrant edurrant@xtra.co.nz

Topics for December meeting

There will be no Beginners session

The end of Year function starts at 6.30 when the Food Truck arrives outside the meeting rooms. Mix and mingle with members; try your best at the Christmas Quizzes and win a prize.

The Annual Mead competition will be judged by Tony Walsworth. Register your mead entries in the Beginners Room up the stairs *before 7pm*.

Bring a plate of nibbles to share when we sample the mead from the judging.

Contents

- 2 James Withington – note from the president
- 4 Club profile – Andrew Bowers
- 6 Mead competition
- 7 Cypriot Honey Tziverti
- 8 Nucs available from club members/ Bees fascinate pupils
- 9 Swarms here, there, everywhere!
- 11 December checklist
- 12 Chartwell apiary
- 13 Interesting websites
- 14 Who can I speak to?
- 15 Meeting location



James Withington – note from the president

With the festive season now upon us, it means we are welcoming the honey flow. Currently there are pockets of a honey flow occurring throughout the district. The following couple of months are the most exciting with the anticipation of the honey flow and the anticipated results.

Swarming is well underway with reports of swarms coming in through both the clubs web site and the Facebook page. If you are available to either collect swarms or home them, please ensure you have registered yourself on the club's website. Thanks to all these members that have responded to calls of swarms in the region. The feedback from the public has been really positive and continues to build the reputation of the club in the community.

Last week I was out collecting a swarm and decided on the way home to grab some fish and chips for dinner. Still dressed in my beekeeping suit and gumboots I wandered into the fish and chip shop and placed my order. The next person through the door was an acquaintance who seeing me in a bee suit started talking about honey bees. While this was happening a member of our club arrived and joined in the conversation. I chuckled at how many people are interested in bees and it's great to see the positivity and interest around the topic.

It has been exciting to see the clubs evolution over the pasts 12 months with us being able to acquire some amazing presenters including Dr Sammy Ramsey and his research into the varroa mite and Dr Phil Lester talk about his pathogens research programme, including the discovery of how the varroa mites feed on the honey bees. On top of this the introduction of the food month, which saw Martin Bosley come along to the club and talk about honey and provide a cooking demonstration, which I am sure now with the finer weather some members will try out.



Note from the president..

Don't forget this month's meeting is the annual social event. It's a great time to mix and mingle among other members of the clubs, swapping stories, ideas and discussing your learnings. In addition, we have our Christmas quizzes with some great prizes to give away, the mead competition will be taking place, and once again we have the Beat Kitchen food truck on site.

Don't forget there is no meeting in January so the next meeting will be February. I look forward to seeing you all next week. Have a great festive period and enjoy your bees and the warm weather.

James

The December meeting will follow the format of last year's Social meeting. The Beat Kitchen **food truck** will be back and will be outside the Johnsonville Community Hall from 6.30pm onwards. There will be a selection of 5 or 6 different meals plus gluten free and vegetarian foods. Meals will range in price from about \$6 through to \$15. The night will also feature a **short quiz** – we all loved last year's quiz, didn't we!

A **sales table** will be running where those crafty people who have non-honey related bee products are welcome to sell them for those special **Christmas stocking fillers**. So, make sure you bring along a little pocket change as you might just find that special gift. While this is going on the judging for the **mead competition** will take place with the winners announced during the evening. A great way to finish the year.



Club Profile – Andrew Bowers

I started beekeeping thinking it was straightforward. I'm a technical guy, how hard can it be? If I just read the books and master the techniques, I can be successful. Well, there are a lot more dimensions to this hobby than I first thought. The last 6 years have been a rollercoaster ride finding out. I've had many successes, but also many challenges and a few failures.



I first encountered beekeeping in 2014 through my son, Eddie. He was a student at Onslow College and a keen member of the school beekeeping club run by Martin Toland. Eddie was looking round for a Technology project, and his teacher Martin suggested he build a top bar hive in the school workshop over winter. Martin and Tricia Laing gave Eddie a lot support and good advice. I was a curious bystander at this stage, watching and helping out. Martin and Eddie bagged a swarm for the top bar that spring. Next, they built five Langstroth hives, three for the school and one each for themselves in the school workshop. So, the following season we had a top bar and a Langstroth.

Eddie and I had mixed success in those early days. All our bees came from swarms. The top hive bar was never really strong, and eventually went queenless. We didn't have the scale or experience to manage it properly, and the top bar was incompatible with the Langstroth, so limited options. The first summer the Langstroth produced a lot of honey, considering it started as an early spring swarm. Sadly, it died the following winter. Boom and bust.

In February 2016, Eddie went off to university, leaving me to manage the two beehives by myself. I wanted to do better, and at least reach sustainability. So, from then on, I've been learning and slowly improving my systems and making my



Club profile – Andrew Bowers

own hives and gear. I've been reading bee books and watching YouTube beekeeping videos, trying different things, experimenting and seeing what works.

A breakthrough came in spring 2017, although unfortunately it did not end well. I decided to go all out on improving my bee health - especially developing a system to get varroa levels really low. At the end of the summer flow the bees were in great shape. I split the two hives, and purchased a couple of mated carniolan queens, going into winter with four strong hives. The carniolans did particularly well that following spring. But things were a little out of control. One hive was hell-bent on swarming, no matter what I could do, and it swarmed into my



nervous neighbours property - twice. By summer (2018/19) I had six big hives sitting in my 2m x 1.5m brick-paved apiary. By January this year it had become all too much for my neighbours, who complained, and my wife suggested my hobby had developed into a bad case of animal hoarding. I needed to do something, and straight away! A very welcoming host in South Karori offered her garden as a new apiary location. Her property backs onto a flat area by the Karori stream. Sunny, sheltered, and perfect for bees! Sadly, it's not a

happy ending. At the end of March the weather turned nasty, the stream flooded, and carried away my hives. So, now it's spring and I'm starting again.

But this time I'm determined to do better. I want to build a sustainable operation, with more control, multiple small sites around Karori, so as not to annoy the neighbours. I'm branching out too. I'm helping out with beekeeping kids at Te Aro School, and mentoring staff at Zealandia.

What I like about beekeeping is that there are so many different aspects to the hobby. There's a social aspect, mentoring, club activities, meeting people, I like



Club profile – Andrew Bowers

making and building things: plenty of opportunity to make hives, and mead. I enjoy the science and technical aspects - there is so much to learn about bees. And animal husbandry, planning and control. There is a continuous improvement aspect to it too - seeing what's not working well, trying different approaches, tinkering and experimenting. And every time you open up a hive, a new episode in a story reveals itself.

Andrew

Mead competition

Members entering their mead in this year's competition, please enter your bottles upstairs in the Beginners Classroom.

There are four categories:

1. Traditional - Dry
2. Traditional - Sweet
3. Traditional - Sparkling
4. Open – Non-traditional meads using Fruit (Melomels) or Spices (Metheglins) or a combination of these.

Be sure to enter your mead in the correct categories. Bring your entries to the upstairs Beginners Room. Each bottle will be given a coloured sticker and a number. Your name should not be on the bottle.

While the meeting is underway, Tony Walsworth will judge the mead. The announcement of the winners will be followed by mead tasting.

Al Courtenay was the 2018 Winner of the Mead cup.



Cypriot Honey Tziverti

First Prize at the 46th World Beekeeping Awards (WBA) in Canada.

The thyme honey Tziverti represented Cyprus and was awarded a gold medal this year's Palais des Congrès in Montreal.



Held every two years, the World Beekeeping Awards are one of the most important events for beekeepers worldwide. This year's event was held at the Apimondia International Apicultural Congress.

As for the aware, the aim is to highlight international excellence for honey and other bee products, with a focus on good beekeeping practices and respect for quality. Open to all amateur and professional beekeepers, the competition is judged by a panel blind-tastes the honey samples from an unlabelled jar. This year 6,000 beekeepers from 80 different countries participated in WBA.

Demetris Papakosta, who founded Tziverti honey in 1950, carried on the on the tradition of using man-made hives of mud and clay, which was first applied in ancient Egypt. Having inherited 20 "tzivertia" from his father, Papakosta eventually exchanged the older hives with modern ones. Using the modern hives, the beekeeper was able to transfer the bees every spring for the flowering of orange plants. In 1981 his son Zacharias with his wife Eleni founded Honey mell company under which the Tziverti Cypriot honey is being sold.

The company has beehives in Peristerona, Prodromos and Pissouri where eucalyptus, thyme, pomegranate, and wild olive trees are thriving, as well as different citrus trees. Tziverti produces wildflower and thyme honey as well as pollen and their products are sold in plastic and glass bottles. In 2013, the same honey was awarded the most prestigious award of WBA called Carl and Virginia Webb Honey Bowl, receiving the official title "Best Honey in the World" among 112 other participations from 25 different countries.



Nucs available from club members

The following members have nucs available for sale. Give them a call and discuss your needs for your apiary for the coming season.

John Randall (Karori) – Ph. 476-9959

James Taylor (Tawa) – 027-378-0186

PK Tan (Porirua) – 021- 109-3388

Eva Durrant (Wadestown) – 027-311-8700

Mark Grenfell (Eastbourne) – 0274-473-337 [Queens and Nucs](#)

Bees fascinate pupils



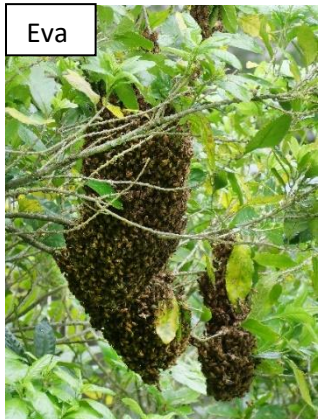
St Bernadette's School, Naenae.

My small demonstration hive is worth its weight in gold. It brings the bees close to the children so they can observe bees passing nectar to another, bottoms up cleaning out cells, even bees emerging. It starts a relationship with nature which the school can build on. **Eva Durrant**



Swarms here, there, everywhere!

Eva



There have been a lot of big swarms landing high up in trees this season. Tools of the trade are ladders, long sticks and a strong resolve to catch them. A collection of recent swarm activity. Some were hard to get.

PK



PK



Eva



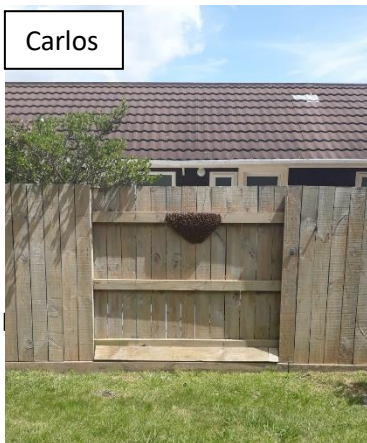
PK





And some were easier!

Carlos



Dean



Richard



Eva





December checklist

Taken from Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand by Andrew Matheson & Murray Reid

- ✓ Remove any varroa treatment applied in early October
- ✓ Feed sugar syrup if honey stores are low
- ✓ Manipulate hives
- ✓ Introduce nucleus hives
- ✓ Check supers for wax moth
- ✓ Super up
- ✓ Prepare honey house equipment
- ✓ Harvest and extract early crops, especially if in the city.



Photo: Eva Durrant



Chartwell apiary



A number of students from Marsden College visited the club's apiary on the 19th November. The bee suits provided by the club were invaluable and ensured that the girls were comfortable looking into the bee boxes. There was a lot of excitement when John Burnet encouraged them to touch the bees.



Pictures Eva Durrant



Interesting websites

This quiz was extracted from— **All a buzzzz** in the Bee Kids Corner of the Bee Culture Magazine, Kim Flottum | Bee Culture kim@beeculture.com

<https://www.beeculture.com/bee-kids-corner-9/>

The Mighty Mandibles

The honey bee has two types of mouth parts – the proboscis and the mandibles. The proboscis is mainly used for sucking up nectar, water and honey. The bees also exchange food with each other using their proboscises.

The mandibles are the strong and useful jaws of the bee consisting of two parts that can open and close. The mandibles of a honey bee are like a tool. They can cut, squeeze, or grasp. Learn more about the many ways honey bees use their mandibles. Match the action word of the mandibles with the hive task.

Honey bees use their mandibles to....

Move	1. _____ dead bees out of their hive
Cut	2. _____ out of the brood cell
Carry	3. _____ wax scales into honeycomb
Remove	4. _____ down unused queen cells
Work	5. _____ wax from one area of the hive to another
Tear	6. _____ propolis into hive cracks and crevices
Bite	7. _____ the proboscis
Form	8. _____ debris from the hive
Attack	9. _____ other bees
Clean	10. _____ intruders
Protect	11. _____ wax moth larvae and mites

Muscles that move them

Mandibles opened and closed



Who can I speak to?

President - James Withington 0272 851206 jwithington2016@gmail.com

Vice-President – John Randall (04) 4769959 john@gingerwillow.com

Treasurer - John Burnet (04) 232 7863 johnburnet@xtra.co.nz

Secretary - Jane Harding 0274212417 janeh@xtra.co.nz

Committee Members

James Scott - Membership and website (04) 565 0164 james@scott.gen.nz

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Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville

