



Next meeting | Wednesday 2nd December 2020

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

There is no Beginners' Class at the December meeting

Social meeting starts at 6pm - see page 2

Contents

- 2 December meeting
- 3 A note from the president – James Withington
- 5 Annual mead competition
- 6 In my apiary – Victoria Leachman
- 8 Honey competition results 2020
2021 WBA calendar
- 9 Bartlett's Rata
- 10 Apiary reports – Chartwell
- 11 – Wingate
- 12 Things to do in December and January by Richard Braczek
- 13 Book Review – How to Manage the Honey Bee in New Zealand
- 17 Pop-Up Shop
Sniffer dog
- 18 Apiculture NZ monthly report from Karin Kos
- 19 Bienenstich Kuchen (Bee sting cake)
- 20 Interesting websites
- 21 Who can I speak to?





December meeting



WHAT IS MEAD
What Does It Taste like?

Annual Mead Competition

Dutchy's Burger Joint – Open at 6pm



Great raffles

Quick Quiz – great fun

Sales table to sell your Bee Stuff

Spot Prizes – just for being there

Please bring a small dessert plate for supper



Note from the president – James Withington

What a funny year it has been as we now move into the festive season.

Personally, I find the December meeting a good way to finish off the year and this year will be no different. Due to the Beat Kitchen moving out of the capital we have invited Dutchy's Burger Joint to provide something to eat. Their website can be found at <https://dutchysburgerjoint.co.nz/> and they intend to provide a variety of burgers including vegetarian options. We will be holding the annual team quiz, along with other entertainment. The objective is designed to be a social one, so please get among the members and meet new people. We are also encouraging people to bring something to add to the supper table, so bust out those baking skills and show us what you can bake.

We will also have several trestles set up in the hall and invite people to bring along their homemade beekeeping items they wish to sell. It could be candles, skin cream, beeswax wraps or something else. The annual mead competition is going to be occurring and hopefully (hint, hint) people can try some of the meads during the night.

I am continuing to get requests from people wishing to host hives on their properties throughout the Wellington region. So, if you are looking for a site please get hold of me, and I will put you in connection with the right people.

Swarming season has been a very stop/start affair this year, but we are still getting calls of swarms. We have found that there are some members on the club's swarm callout list that are no longer interested in receiving calls and collecting swarms. If that is you and you no longer wish to be contacted, I ask that you remove yourself. Swarm collection is a free service the club provides to the greater Wellington region and a good way to collect some freebees, (yes that is an intended pun). It is always courteous to provide a jar of honey to the informant of the swarm.



The committee has recently met and mapped out next year's monthly meetings. We still intend to connect with international speakers and pre-record interviews for the club meetings. With the global pandemic there are massive beekeeping resources sitting idle in their home countries, so at no costs to use we have the ability to connect with them.

It would be remiss of me to not acknowledge some of the work that goes on behind the scenes of the club that you may not be aware of. Firstly, Barbara who runs the kitchen each month and provides the amazing homemade baking. She spends hours baking in the kitchen prior to each meeting along with the smooth running of the kitchen, plus all the clean up each time you get a cup of tea. Please acknowledge her tireless efforts when you see her.

James Scott and John Burnett for the redesigning of the club's website. This has been several years in the making, so thanks to them for making it happen. James designed the clubs first website and been looking after it for a number of years, and he is looking to hand over this mantle, so if someone is willing to pick it up and run with it please let me know. And lastly Frank Lindsay, for all the knowledge he parts onto us, the learnings he teaches us and the time he spends in the club's own apiary. We are blessed as a club to have him among our ranks and his continued support is greatly appreciated.

On that note, I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable Christmas. Hopefully, the sun starts shining soon and the wind dies down so the honey flow can start properly. Do not forget there is no meeting in January so we will be back on 3 February to hear all your stories.

James



Annual Mead competition

The mead will be judged during the meeting. If you still have some of your 2020 vintage, bring it along to be judged – you may have a winner!

Tony Walsworth will judge the mead again this year.

- **Entries will be accepted in the upstairs Beginners Room from 6pm, where each bottle will be labelled for the competition.**
- **Your name should not be on the bottle.**
- **Be sure to enter your mead in the correct categories**

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.**

Following the competition, it would be wonderful if the entrants opened the bottles for tasting.





In my apiary – Victoria Leachman



Photo: Eva Durrant

I live in Island Bay, Wellington, one block back from the Parade. I have four hives. My bees are in the back garden of my home and are sheltered from the southerlies thanks to a good perimeter of trees and a tall teucrium hedge. Being so close to the Parade and the long line of mature pohutukawa, it is no surprise that the main nectar flow in this area occurs in December. Being an urban beekeeper, I was worried about how my neighbours would react. I'm really lucky in that my two closest neighbours are gardeners and their vegetable and fruit yields have noticeably improved. A gift of honey for each of my neighbours has helped keep things sweet as well.

This is my third season of being a beekeeper. I'd been interested in it for a couple of years prior to getting bees but with my husband terminally ill and a full time job I just didn't have time. So instead I got my bee fix watching Youtube videos. I particularly liked watching Vino Farm <https://www.youtube.com/c/VinoFarm> as he is honest about his mistakes and made it seem okay to try things out and learn by doing. After my husband died, I had more free time and I joined the bee club. About six months later I got my first two nucs.



Despite reading the New Zealand beekeepers bible and watching all those Youtube videos, I've still got so much to learn. My first two hives had a fantastic summer creating heaps of honey stores but didn't survive the winter because of varroa and damp. I treated them but didn't know enough to realise the treatment hadn't worked well. In my second year I bought a nuc and got a big swarm. I ended up splitting the swarm twice and went into winter with four hives.

My hives are now in sunnier positions, higher off the ground, and I test varroa levels regularly so all four hives wintered well. I caught the fact that the varroa loved the mild winter in 2020 and I treated early. The hives all had good honey stores coming out of winter but that went by the start of November. I've added top feeders to get them through. The brood numbers are booming and they are ready for the flow.

I really enjoy beekeeping. I find it involves a lot of observation, asking questions, researching and thinking. I'm learning all the time. They are fascinating creatures and I love watching them. I often have my morning coffee at the window so I can watch their flight patterns. With the way the morning sun shines, they are like little golden specks that glitter as they fly. It helps me figure out what is in flower in the area. I can't help sharing the latest thing I've learnt with my friends and work colleagues. I talk about bees a lot - I probably bore people - but I can't help it. They are the most amazing insects.





Honey competition results 2020

Liquid Honey

- 1st Place Eva Durrant
2nd Place Christine Gregory
3rd Place John Randall

Creamed Honey

- 1st Place Markus Landvogt
2nd Place Michele van Daalen
3rd Place Eva Durrant



2021 WBA calendar

Fantastic Christmas Gift
Available at the meeting
\$10 each





Bartlett's Rata

Eva Durrant

I visited the Otari-Wilton's Bush the other day on the advice of Phil Parnell, one of its Trustees. The attraction was the flowering of a very rare tree, Bartlett's Rata.

First observed in 1975 in Radar Bush near Cape Reinga at the northern tip of the North Island by an Auckland school teacher and amateur botanist, John K Bartlett. *Metrosideros bartlettii* was a remarkable discovery. It was not a small plant easy to overlook but a large tree, up to 25m in height, with trunks one metre or more in diameter consisting of coalesced roots. Bartlett noticed it because of its unusual bark, which is almost white, soft and spongy, separating in thin flakes. There were no flowers present, but leaves enabled it to be identified as a *Metrosideros*.

Twenty-seven trees of Bartlett's rata are now known growing in bush remnants in valley heads on the Te Paki peninsula. They grow mostly near streams or in swamy sites, and they may be terrestrial or initially epiphytic on trees, including puriri and tree ferns. It was not until 1984 that flowers were seen, and they were a further surprise, being small, white and looking like snow over the tree crowns. The flowers are about 8mm long with stamens about 5mm long. The tree flowers in late spring to early summer and the seed capsules mature from late summer to early autumn.



Myrtaceae Metrosideros bartlettii

Ref: New Zealand's Native Trees by John Dawson & Rob Lucas



Apiary Reports

Chartwell Apiary



There are now twelve hives and about ten nucs at the apiary. During a sunny patch in the middle of the month Richard Braczek checked all hives for AFB – all clear.

On Monday 23rd November 20 students from Marsden College visited the apiary and John Burnet, Andrew Bowers, Martin Toland and Eva Durrant, opened hives so that the girls could peer into the fascinating world of the beehive. The initial reaction was of trepidation and nervousness in the proximity to thousands of buzzing bees. However, these feelings were soon replaced with a desire to understand the life of the bees and the role of beekeepers, and excitement when a queen was spotted. Another dozen or so converts! Two hives inspected were queen-less. This was the second visit from the college.

Eva Durrant



Wingate Apiary

Members met at the Hutt apiary on Saturday 28 November to do swarm checks and to have a look at the splits made last time.

They also did a varroa test on the hives to see how well the varroa treatments were working. Currently we are using oxalic strips and fumigation.

Members also cleaned up some donated equipment and mowed the grass around the hives.

We are currently meeting at the apiary on a monthly basis. If you would like to come along, check out the 'Wingate Apiary' Facebook account to see when the next meeting is being held.

Richard Braczek





Things to do in December and January – by Richard Braczek

Swarm cells

In December, keep an eye out for swarm cells in hives that you haven't split yet. Check every two weeks (10 days is best) and split to prevent swarming if you come across any. (Swarm prevention was covered in the October newsletter.)

Varroa Strips

Remove any remaining strips in your hives before the honey flow.

Honey flow

As your honey supers fill up, add new boxes on top. A hive can fill a honey super in a week so ensure that you put extra boxes on if you are going away over Christmas.

Extracting

When combs are largely capped, they can be extracted and then put back on the hives. For efficiency you might want to wait until the honey flow has finished. If booking a club extractor, best to get in early before the rush.

Tutin Test

If you extract your honey before the end of December, you don't have to have it tested for tutin. Any extracted after 1 January must be tested if you want to give it away or sell it. The club sends off composite samples for testing in February and March.

Relax

Sit in the garden drinking a nice beer or rosé and appreciate all the hard work your bees are doing for you.



How to Manage the Honey Bee in New Zealand

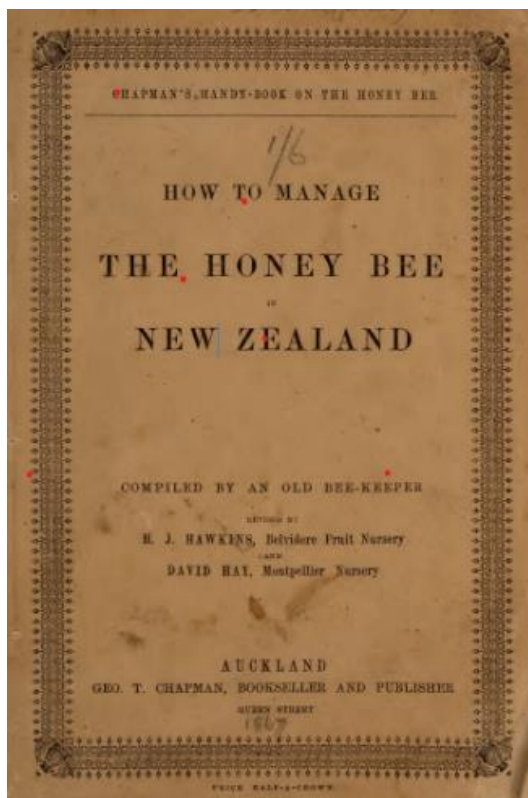
Reviewed by Judith de Wilde

Compiled by an Old Bee-Keeper

Revised by H.J Hawkins and David Hay

Price “half a crown”

I was asked to review a copy of this publication which was forwarded to me via the internet and of course I said yes. This 76-page handy book publication was published in Auckland by Geo. T. Chapman, bookseller and publisher, probably in 1867. This date is hand written in and it does correlate well with following a few years behind William Cottons book, “A Manual for New Zealand Bee Keepers”, first published in 1848.



The author is unnamed but much of the body of this book is confessed to be copied from both Cottons book and material from “The Times Bee-Master” publications with input from H.Hawkins, D.Hay and other trusted beekeepers. I strongly suspect our author wished to remain anonymous as his distaste for Cotton stood out from the start. Our author exceeds himself in criticising Cotton.



The comparisons were a constant theme and a distraction. If our author's objective was to simplify beekeeping and encourage uptake, he also failed here too, describing in depth no less than 5 types of hives. The chapter headings frequently did not match the body of the text, with subject matter bouncing around quite a bit. He is prone to the odd ramble. But all this aside there was some interesting reading to be had in this book.

It is widely recognised that the Honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, was first introduced onto New Zealand soil by Mary Bumby, the sister of a Methodist missionary in March of 1839. Many more followed, being imported to pollinate crops and produce honey for the bee owners. It was interesting to learn that landowners shipped clover from England yearly, because all clover crops died in those early years of colonialization, through lack of pollination. NZ proved to be a hospitable environment for the honey bee and the number of wild/feral colonies multiplied rapidly. Maori being some of the first commercial beekeepers, sourcing their honey from these wild colonies. Our author has his opinion on this practice.

It is hard to image travel in the 1800s but many journey's involved weeks of coastal ship voyage and/or horse and cart travel to cover what we consider short distances today. This was brought to the fore with advice on how prepare and manage hives for travel which include the canvas wrapping of straw hives.

Langstroth moveable frame hives were not present in NZ when this book was written, so all hive were hollow vessels. Straw hives were still in use, with the recommendation from our author, to have them housed under open sheds, to shelter them from the elements and allow ventilation. Wooden expandable hives where gaining popularity with some debate. By the end of this book I gather that sideways expandable and glass bell/jar vertical extension where in common practice for honey production.

Interestingly in this period there was no form of hive which allowed for the extraction of honey without killing bees. Hives of all descriptions where tipped upside down and comb cut out. Heavy brood comb was placed into a new hive in the same location as the original. A smoker and feather brush were used to



remove bees as best possible. All remaining comb was then cut and sorted on the spot. What sorted the good from the bad, was the purity. (White, capped, no brood).

Uniting hives was no friendlier to the bees. One simply emptied the bees from one hive onto a sheet, tip the second over the top. Closed them up for a few hours and then rehouse them in a hive all together. It's a wonder these early settlers managed to keep any of their bees. Uniting hives in autumn was the recommended practice, "The objective is to reduce stock to the number which the beekeeper wishes to swarm the following spring".

Yes, that's correct. Swarming was not discouraged, although the subject of prevention is touched on a couple of times; in this era, swarming was business as usual. Our author goes to great lengths to describe how one is to recognise an immanent swarm, manner of recapture and re-housing. Swarm collection was how a beekeeper started out and how they increased their stock. Many of the early settlers were caught out with the differences of swarm behaviour here compared to their homeland, England. In NZ the initial swarm congregation point can last up to 12 or more hours, can swarm early to late in the season, varying times and a single hive, multiple occasions. In England bees will typically only congregate for 30min to 2 hours maximum, never more than once per hive, summer only and usually early afternoon.

Imagine a world where the biggest perceived enemy to your honey bees are stink bugs and spiders. I suspect brood comb was never given much attention and diseases simply went undetected.

Tobacco, fungus, fabric cloths were all used in smokers made of tin. Caution was advised not to burn your bee's wings. Ether and Chloroform were touted as potentially a better option to the tradition smoker. Scary stuff.

A piece of advice that made me smile, was to place your bee shed (meaning the bee shelter housing your bee hives) as close as possible to your dwelling. Let your children play beside these hives as bees are very fond of children. Another



delightful tip was when you here that angry noise bees make whilst working with them, quietly walk away and stick your head in a bush.

There are recipes for ancient mead making, wines, multiple slaves and remedies that are worth a look at.

Towards the end is a chapter “The sermon on Bees”, it makes for interesting analogies.

I loved Dr Cummings observation, “that the wide use for sugar-cane and gas superseding the use of candles are affecting the profitability of beekeeping. If people would consider eating honey for breakfast instead of rancid London butter and “nasty” greasy bacon, not only would the health of people be better but their temper would be sweeter”.

If you wish to read a piece history relating to bee husbandry, through the eyes/emotions of an old educated colonial beekeeper in an era before movable frames, this short publication makes for some fascinating reading. The content does not fit with today’s knowledge of best practices, so it needs to be read lightly in contexts with the era, within which it was written.

Four Stings



howmanagehoney
b00oldb.pdf



Pop-Up Shop

I have received an invitation for the Club to participate in an Artisan Food products Pop-Up Shop being set up by Wellington NZ and First Retail in Willis St opposite New World Metro for the month of December, 7 days per week. They want to have events to draw people into the Shop and suggest including a couple of bee sessions with the Display Hive, timing to suit us but hopefully at a high traffic time. Obviously, a Display Hive would only work for a couple of days at a time and should be supervised by a member who is willing to talk bees and answer questions. A major issue is likely to be the absence of nearby parking. Any interest here or members willing to participate - maybe a Sat or Sun? Contact me if you are interested. **John Burnet**

Sniffer dogs

Smells like COVID

This is Floki, a springer spaniel that scientists at the University of Adelaide in Australia are training to detect signs of coronavirus infection in human



sweat. The research is part of an international effort to train sniffer dogs to rapidly screen people for COVID-19. The training methods are similar to those used with dogs trained to detect drugs or explosives. The canines are rewarded with positive reinforcement — in Floki's case, being allowed to play with his favourite toy — when they pick a person with COVID-19's sweat sample out of a line-up. Preliminary studies show that dogs trained in this way are able to identify people who are infected with the coronavirus before they develop symptoms. A pilot scheme involving 4 sniffer dogs at Helsinki airport indicated that dogs can detect the presence of the virus in less than 10 seconds with nearly 100% accuracy.



The Update 20 November 2020 (excerpts)

from CE Karin Kos

The ApiNZ Board met in Wellington on the 16th November for its last meeting of the year. It was the first face to face meeting since the AGM and provided an excellent opportunity to look ahead to 2021 and to meet with senior MPI officials on our key priorities from our Strategy and articulated in our [Briefing to Incoming Ministers](#). We also had an opportunity to speak with the Agriculture and Trade Minister, the Hon Damien O'Connor and other key stakeholders later that day.

While Wellington may seem far removed from the day-to-day activities of managing hives and running honey businesses, it helps to have a presence in the city and to be able to front up and talk about the issues that matter to our industry, whether it's bee health or a market access issue. Zoom and Skype may be the default options for meetings these days, but I think we'd all agree face to face works best. **Apimondia** will hold an online conference entitled: **'Back to basics, back to bees'** focused on sustainable beekeeping based over **5 & 6 February 2021**. More information can be found [here](#).

The **Big Buzz Festival** will be held on **14 February 2021** in Matakana, north of Auckland. This free, family-friendly festival will celebrate bees, honey and ethical beekeeping. If you are interested in becoming a stall holder you can apply [here](#). More information about the festival can be found [here](#).





Bienenstich Kuchen

Bee Sting Cake

Ingredients: 250g Butter, 1 cup sugar, 4 large eggs, grated rind and juice of one lemon, 1 ½ cups plain flour (sifted), 2 tsp baking powder, whipped cream

For the Glaze:

Mix together in a saucepan: ¼ cup sugar, 1 tblsp milk, 50g butter, ¼ tsp nutmeg, ½ cup honey, ½ cup slivered almonds.

Bring to boil, stirring occasionally.



Method:

Cream butter and sugar

Add eggs one at a time then beat till smooth

Stir in lemon rind and juice

Sift flour and baking powder together, and fold into the creamed mixture

Set aside.

Grease two 20cm cake tins

Pour the honey glaze into one tin and spoon half of the batter over the glaze

Spoon the rest of the cake batter into the second cake tin

Bake at 180 degrees C. for 35 – 40 minutes

Let stand for ten minutes then turn out and cool completely

Pile the whipped cream on the unglazed layer and place glazed layer on top.

Thanks to Mary-Ann Lindsay for the recipe



Interesting websites

[Ecrotek | Choosing Bee Hive Frames - Wooden vs Plastic Frames](#)

Ecrotek | Choosing Bee Hive Frames - Wooden vs Plastic Frames • Ecrotek



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

Frank Lindsay – (04) 478 3376

Judith de Wilde – Librarian (04 235 8173) kiwicavingrose@gmail.com

Barbara Parkinson – Supper co-ordinator (04 2379624) parkinson@xtra.co.nz

PK Tan - 021 1093388 pk.propserv@gmail.com

Tony Coard - puruwai@gmail.com

Claire Hart - claire22mum@gmail.com

Jill Dalton - jimh.jilld@gmail.com

Tricia Laing - 0274 766540 tricialaing48@gmail.com

Newsletter editors

Eva Durrant 027 3118700 edurrant@xtra.co.nz

Jane Harding 0274212417 janeh@xtra.co.nz

