



**Next meeting** | 5th February 2019

**Where** | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Road

**February Editor** | Jane Harding [janeh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:janeh@xtra.co.nz)

### Topics for February meeting

**Beginners session** : Upstairs meeting room at 6.45pm

**Topic:** Extracting Honey. John Burnet and Eva Durrant

**Main Meeting:** In the Main hall at 7.30pm

**Topic** : Varroa treatment options. Frank Lindsay and Tony Coard

Panel discussion – ask the experts - bring your questions and beekeeping queries to get answered by a panel of experienced beekeepers

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## James Withington – note from the President

Well it appears that summer has finally arrived in Wellington, with some more settled warmer weather. Although the honey flow commenced quite late this season it suddenly went gang busters in early January with everything appearing to bloom at once. It was amazing to see the volume of nectar coming in on some days which caught a number of members by surprise causing them to quickly assemble additional boxes and frames for their hives.

Now we move into the fun but sticky part of the season with the joys of honey extracting occurring. Just a reminder that the club does have honey extractors for hire to assist you and John Burnet takes care of the bookings for these (Ph: 0274379062). Due to the demand for these please consider booking them for a mid-week extraction otherwise you may have to wait several weekends before they become available. Also remember to completely clean them before returning them to John for the next person to use. John will provide you instructions on how to clean them. If you intended to give away or sell your honey a reminder that any honey extracted from the hives post 31 December needs to be tutin tested and John will speak about this at the next meeting, as he coordinates the sampling with the laboratory.

There are still reports of swarms occurring throughout the region so for those of you looking to expand your hives number please ensure that you have placed your name and a contact phone number on the swarm list.

There has been quite a bit of interest in people wishing to join the beekeepers club over the summer period. They have cordially been invited to attend the next club meeting is Wednesday 5 February 2020. If you see someone looking lost or unsure of being at the meeting please take the time to introduce yourself and make them feel welcome. We have all been through this process and remember how welcoming previous members have been to us. I look forward to seeing you and hearing of your stories from over the honey flow.



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## Mead Competition Results

A large number of entries were submitted for the annual Mead Competition held at the December meeting. All four competition categories were represented, with the majority of entries in the sweet category. Our judge this year was Tony Walsworth, who has many years experience at making and judging mead, melomels and metheglins. The overall winner this year was once again Alwyn Courtenay.



*Alwyn Courtenay being presented with the Mead Cup by Tony Walsworth*

I asked Tony for his comments on the competition entries this year:

“We had a great time judging the entries and whilst there was a wide variance of quality there were a few entries that clearly stood out from the rest. The main ingredient of a good mead is time and many of the poorer entries were simply not finished and tasted yeasty or syrupy.”



Tony encourages everyone to keep trying and offers the following tips to get a good mead result:

- Start early and rack several times when fermentation is complete.
- Test your alcohol potential at the outset and then brew until 2-3% remains for a sweet mead or 1% for a dry mead.
- Beware of sulphation! This makes mead smell like used babies' nappies! In the first few days of fermentation when the yeast is multiplying it needs oxygen. Insufficient oxygen in the must means the yeast excretes sulphides along with carbon dioxide and this produces the foul smell. Sniff the airlock several times a day for the first week and if you smell nappies, pour the must back and forth between two clean buckets to oxygenate it. Then return the must to the brewing vessel with an airlock. You may have to do this several times.
- Be sure to pick a yeast that suits your alcohol and temperature ranges. There are several good mead yeasts available from brew shops.

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## Supper Roster

Barbara, our super-organised supper supremo, is looking for some extra supper roster helpers, please. The tasks are not onerous, your chance to meet everyone in the club and you get to choose the biscuits....

Please see Barbara at one of the meetings and find a supper slot that you can fill.

Thanks in advance.



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## February Reminders

**Honey extraction** – contact the Treasurer, John Burnet, to book one of the club extractors. They're in demand at this time of year, so make sure you book well in advance of when you want one.

**Tutin Testing** – John Burnet will have tutin sample jars at the next three meetings for members to provide samples taken from honey harvested from 1 Jan. Over the next three months the Club will submit batches of 10 samples to Analytica Laboratories for composite testing. This composite submission process is the cheapest way (\$22 per sample) for members to confirm their honey does not contain tutin in excess of 0.7mg per kg of both honey (maximum allowable level).

**Varroa treatment** – For varroa treatment to be effective all members should ideally treat their hives at the same time to reduce risk of re-infection from neighbouring hives. The date 18 Feb is widely recognised as the optimum date for this season's treatment. There are several products available but some can only be used after honey for human consumption has been removed from the hives. The Treasurer will have a number of products available at the Feb meeting and we will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.

**The club encourages all members to treat for varroa at the same time to ensure maximum knockdown of varroa, so please try and apply your treatments on or as close to 18 February as possible**



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## TIME TO REQUEEN – Words of wisdom from Frank Lindsay

I like collecting swarms but lately I have noticed that the bees in some of the swarms I have collected that are a mix of yellow and dark coloured bees. I.E. Italian hybrids and Carniolan crosses. Now I don't mind either type of bee provided I can go into the garden, gently lift the roof and hive mat to take a peak at what's going on, without the use of smoke or a suit.

However, these hybrids don't like being disturbed and one or two will come out at you and sting as soon as you lift the roof, even to feed them.

If your bees swarmed this season and the next generation produced are like this or you have to use excessive smoke to control your bees, consider requeening your colonies now while the flow is still going.

### **Here's how to go about requeening a hive which has an active queen.**

1. Order a new queen. See below for links to reputable queen breeders.
2. Find and cage the existing queen (see below for some tips on finding an unmarked queen). Leave her caged for four to five days. I mostly use old queen cages and press two and a half jelly beans into the candy area and then cover the escape hole with tape. I then open the frames up a little and press the cage horizontally on a 45 degree angle down into the frames with the top grill of the cage exposed. This way, the bees can get access to the front of the cage and feed the queen. (Note: A queens can be caged for weeks if required provided the bees can look after them).
3. After four to five days, go through the hive and rub out any emergency queens cells produced. Also check and see if there are any eggs in the brood frames. There shouldn't be unless you have another queen in the hive.



4. When your ordered queen arrives, remove the old caged queen and insert the new queen still in her cage into the same position and leave for three days for the bees in the cage to take on the hive scent. If you wish, you can make a three frame nuc and pop the old queen in this as insurance against the new queen not being accepted.
5. After three days cut out the tab and allow the queen to emerge from the cage naturally which could take another day or two. Don't disturb the hive for 10 days so the new queen gets established and is laying. (A new queen is not the mother of the hive until she is laying eggs).
6. On the twentieth day after caging the queen, all the old queen's brood will have emerged so it's a good idea to treat the hive for varroa as all the varroa will be on the bees and you can get a 96% or better kill with one vapourisation of Oxalic Acid or by putting in a strip. If you are going to use strip, remove the honey or isolate the honey by putting in a bee escape board above the brood nest and then remove it again after the treatment. (seven days).

**How to find the queen:** Here are some techniques you can use to help find the queen if you've never been able to spot your queen (particularly hard if she is unmarked)

1. Shake all the bees off the brood frames in the second super into the bottom super and place a queen excluder over the first super hopefully trapping the queen in the bottom super. Allow the hive to settle for a day or two before looking the queen.
2. Or, place a queen excluder between the first and second super and wait five days. The brood super with the eggs has the queen in it. Again check for emergency queen cells in the other super and rub them out. Remove this super and set it aside about a metre or two from the original hive position. Cover to prevent robbing and after



- about an hour, all the field bees that were in that super will have gone back to the original hive. If you've got a new queen at this time, you could insert the new queen into the brood box of the original hive right away. Just make sure that the bees haven't made any emergency queen cells as when they emerge, they will kill your new queen
3. Once you've isolated the box with the queen in it, and set it aside for an hour, it's a lot easier to go through that box looking for the old queen. Use as little smoke as possible as this could cause her to run and hide. She will generally be on a frame with eggs and emerging brood about the third frame in during the morning.
  4. If you want to keep your old queen for any reason transfer her, and the frame she is on, into a nuc box and add a couple of frames of honey and a shake of bees from the now depleted brood super.

**Queen Breeders:** I have my preference as to who I purchase queens from that being Gary Jeffery, Westport but there are plenty of other queen producers in the lower North Island.

The Mason Boys, Bulls 027 864 0705

Kereru Queen Bees <kereruqueenbees@gmail.com>

Southern Sun Queen Bees : 027 248 9419, Gary@southernsun.co.nz

Gary Jeffery, WEST COAST PEDIGREE BEES LTD P.O.Box 55, Westport

Phone 03-789-7232





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## Swarms and Swarm Collecting

If you find a swarm and want it collected, you can log a request here:

<https://www.beehive.org.nz/swarms/find-collector>

If you want to register as a swarm collector, go here:

<https://www.beehive.org.nz/swarms/offer-to-collect>

If you want to receive swarms, register here:

<https://www.beehive.org.nz/swarms/offer-to-receive>

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## AFB Recognition Courses

The AFB Management Agency is once again offering courses around the country to beekeepers on recognising and eliminating AFB in their hives. The courses are for one day, cost \$100 and include a test at the end. Passing the test and being fully compliant with AFB Management Plan rules for 12 months allows a beekeeper to apply for a DECA (Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement) and conduct their own hive inspections for AFB.

You can register for a course [here](#). The next local course is in Lowe Hutt on 7 March.

And if you want to know more about the AFB Management Agency's plan for monitoring and auditing beekeepers and the enforcement actions they can undertake, you can read all about it in the AFB Management Agency's [Operational Plan](#)



## Camp Rangi

You can still register for the Camp Rangi weekend camp from 21 -23 February. Entries are now being accepted from all beekeepers, you don't need to have 2 or more years' experience.

The Southern North Island Bee Group is again hosting a weekend camp for beekeepers at Camp Rangi Wood in the Totara Reserve, Pohangina Valley.

**BEE GREEN BUZZ WEEKEND**  
**21–23 February 2020**  
*Camp Rangi Wood*  
*Totara Reserve Regional Park*  
*Pohangina Valley*



Harvesting to wintering down.  
A hands on weekend with commercial beekeepers. For registered beekeepers, with two or more years' experience.



**Early Bird registrations, by 30 November**  
**Will receive a special goodie bag.**



Accommodation: bunk rooms or bring your own RV/Caravan, tent or skep!  
Live in and Campers \$250  
Day attendees Saturday and Sunday \$200

Hosted by the Southern North Island Beekeeping Group Inc and the SNI Education Trust.



Registration forms available on [www.snibeekeeping.nz](http://www.snibeekeeping.nz)



Camp Rangi is a wonderful opportunity to mingle with other beekeepers, learn lots of new things and have a lot of fun!




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## From the Librarian

I started beekeeping through the kindly encouragement of a neighbour and I am forever grateful for her introduction. I was hooked but rapidly grasped that there was more to placing I hive in my backyard and waiting to harvest honey. I loved everything about my bees so as a novice bee keeper, with limited knowledge/skill and a couple of failures under my belt (together with the successes), I joined the Wellington beekeeping Club to absorb as much information as possible and broaden my knowledge/skills.

Librarian was a natural progression. Wow free access to endless reading material. Reading is one thing. Writing reviews is another. I would not know a noun from an adjective. But I wish to encourage other members to use the library. The committee has agreed to the purchase for new library books so do come to the table at meetings to check out what is available. New books will be available from March.

**Book Reviews.** I thought it was long overtime that I kept to my promise of a monthly published book review. I will review a book from the Library, plus one other bee related book.

Each book will be given a sting rating  from one to five. One being the poorest and 5 being a must read. Please this is no reflection of the club but my personal opinion and I hope it will generate some conversations. Happy reading.

### A Box of Bees

A collection of poetry by Emily Dobson. The poems give short easily digestible snippets in Emily's childhood with her beekeeping family in the Hawkes Bay, travel abroad and falling in love. I found the family topics of divorce, rape and misadventures disturbing. Although this form of narrative poetry isn't



particularly to my taste, I did enjoy a few of the poems that stayed on natural ground of beekeeping subjects.

*Into the big red plastic bucket,  
goes roller-dried, unsalted yeast,*

*industrial grade raw sugar,  
a special type of milk powder, water –*

*my father's protein mix for the bees  
building up their numbers in Spring.*

*Unless they have sufficient protein,  
The queen won't start laying.*

*The smell is sharp and the paste  
is thickly resistant –*

*Stirring the stuff with a wooden stick  
hurts my arms.*

From me 2 stings



## Practical BEEKEEPING in New Zealand

4<sup>th</sup> Edition 2011 by Andrew Matheson and Murray Reid.

This is not a Wellington Bee Club book but a book I have on my book shelf. It has been my bible. Yes, this is the book I most frequently refer back too. It has a wealth of practical information to all things New Zealand beekeeping related.

The information is detailed and comprehensive on all aspects of beekeeping from basic biology, hive equipment, NZ nectar and pollen sources/content, value charts, seasonal management guidelines, feeding, dividing, swarms,



queen subjects, diseases. The list goes on. Particularly useful are the handy tips section at the back of the book with a selection valuable formulas.

It is an essential beekeeping book for New Zealand beekeepers of all levels and it should be part of your collection, beginner or experienced. There is the 5th Edition in publication which has been completely revised and updated with photos now in full colour.

Five Stings



Editor's Note: John Burnet (the Treasurer) has this book available for sale.

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## In Case you Missed It...

Link below to a Radio New Zealand article from Nine to Noon on 21<sup>st</sup> January where RNZ talks to David Cramp, an expert on bees and bee science. David is off to Tonga to support community initiatives to raise awareness of climate change and will use his beekeeping skills to do this.

[Tongan Farmers Get Beekeeping Boost](#)

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## What's coming up in March?

In March we will host Karin Kos, CEO of ApiNZ who will come and talk to us about the state of the beekeeping industry in New Zealand and what ApiNZ has been up to.



# Calendar of Regular WBA events

Please Note: This calendar outlines the general run of club events during the year, but is subject to change.

	WBA Monthly meetings		WBA Field days	Workshops	Regional Events	National Events
	Beginners	Main				
When & Where	JCC 6.45pm	JCC 7.30pm	Chartwell Apiary 1st Sat after the meeting	Wayne Wild's - Wainuiomata Dates tbc	tbc	tbc
Feb	Extracting honey					
Mar	Legal regs - apiary registration, council reqs, public relations and tutin testing		Take off Honey and Varroa treatment			
Apr	Hive equipment	Honey competition			Southern North Island Bee Group field day (location variable)	
May	Acquiring bees, working a hive and handling bees	Gadgets and Gizmos competition	Wintering down the hives		Wellington Better Home and Living Show	
June	Bee biology - castes, colony behaviour and roles, other bees					APINZ National Conference
July	No session (AGM)	AGM		Hiveware construction and wax dipping		
Aug	Preparing for a new season	Photo Competition				
Sept	Nectar and Pollen sources		Swarm prevention		Southern North Island Bee Group field day (location variable)	Bee Awareness Month
Oct	Pests and Diseases		Preparing for the honey flow			
Nov	Finding bees and harvesting honey		Summer hive management	Wax dipping		
Dec	No session (social night)	Mead competition				



## Who can I speak to?

**President** - James Withington 0272 851206 [jwithington2016@gmail.com](mailto:jwithington2016@gmail.com)

**Vice-President** – John Randall (04) 4769959 [john@gingerwillow.com](mailto:john@gingerwillow.com)

**Treasurer** - John Burnet (04) 232 7863 [johnburnet@xtra.co.nz](mailto:johnburnet@xtra.co.nz)

**Secretary** - Jane Harding 0274212417 [janeh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:janeh@xtra.co.nz)

### Committee Members

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

Frank Lindsay – (04) 478 3376

Judith de Wilde – Librarian (04 235 8173) [kiwicavingrose@gmail.com](mailto:kiwicavingrose@gmail.com)

Barbara Parkinson – supper co-ordinator (04 2379624) [parkinson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:parkinson@xtra.co.nz)

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### Meeting location

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