



All meetings have been cancelled until further notice

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In my apiary – John Burnet

Long-time hobbyist beekeeper

I got into beekeeping quite by accident. Over 30 years ago (BV i.e. before varroa) one of my workmates was transferred to Auckland. “What will I do with my bee hive?” he wails. “That’s OK” I said, “I’ll look after it – you can buy a new hive once you get settled in Auckland”. So I became the proud owner of a hive with no beekeeping knowledge or experience. I immediately joined the Club (Frank is about the only member left from that era). The monthly meetings were in Marion St – heart of the red-light district in the mid-eighties – lots off girls hanging around the street in the evenings. I remember one girl – bored with no business outside joined the meeting one night. She didn’t come back the next month or become a beekeeper though!

Anyway, that was the beginning. One hive quickly became two, two became eight – hive splitting and swarm catching and with no varroa (until about 2003) meant that I was always expanding. All hives were then in my back yard although the neighbours never knew as the apiary was surrounded by blackberry and it was a 10 metre drop to the house over the back fence. A belt of trees separated the hives from our washing line and the kids’ back yard. No problems although I had to keep the lawn regularly mown to prevent the clover flowering and reduce risk of bee stings in bare feet.

Eventually common sense prevailed, and I moved my hives, first to Arohata prison and when then that became medium security to other semi-rural sites around Tawa. I have been a remote beekeeper ever since, currently with 10 hives in three sites – most in the Botanic Gardens. Occasionally I collect a swarm at night and Site it in my back yard pending transfer to one of my apiaries. But invariably I have to add supers and suddenly the hive is too big to move “until the following winter!” It’s great though to wander down to the hive with my morning cup of coffee and watch the bees coming and going.



Since retirement I have expanded the beekeeping equipment supply business the beginnings of which was spun-off the Club Treasurer's job some years ago and have done some contract work for a couple of local commercial beekeepers. But commercial beekeeping is a young man's game – honey supers seem to be getting heavier every year!

Recently I have become involved with a local honey company Bee Fresh Farms Ltd who own about 20 hives, an extraction plant and packages and markets Wellington honey sourced from several suppliers - some are Club members with more honey than they can handle. Most of this is sold direct to the public at local markets but also to specialty stores and supermarkets. I enjoy the end-to-end involvement in the business and it's pleasing to see the increasing number of consumers who are more discerning about their honey and want to buy local and support local beekeepers. There's also increasing resistance to paying high prices for manuka honey. Wellingtonians at the markets often say "the tourists can have the manuka – I want a local honey with more flavour and at a reasonable price!"

Hives at the Cathedral site





Beehives in Nepal

These photos of beehives were taken in the Langtang Valley, Nepal, where **Jill Dalton and Jim Hepburn** spent some time trekking.



◀1

▶2



◀3

▶4



◀5

▶6



1. was at the doorway of a small lodge we stayed in. You can see the shoes underneath!
2. the hive is next to the corn that has been harvested and drying
3. suspended and out of the way. I liked the mud construction used
4. who knows where the hive was – just a hole in the wall was a giveaway
- 5 and 6. Just outside someone's house! Again, interesting construction using clay



◀7



▶8



◀9



▶10

7. just outside the lodge on the gatepost.

8. we just loved this innovative use of the cupboard on the front porch! No idea what it looked like inside.

9. just saw a heap of cut comb - but no idea how it got there or how they harvest it.

10. their bees look a bit different!



Best Practice Beekeeping is a new Online Video Learning Series and Book brought to you by Ecrotek. The brainchild of **Dr. Mark Goodwin**, world renowned Apiculture Scientist, and **Sarah Cross**, Plant and Food Research Assistant, **Best Practice Beekeeping** is the perfect blend of science alongside 'real-world' practical application designed specifically for beekeepers. In this series, Mark and Sarah are also joined by experienced Commercial Beekeeper, **Andrew Stratford**, who provides further insight into effective beekeeping operations.

If you want to become a better beekeeper this is an online series you don't want to miss!



Stay tuned for your **FREE TRIAL** when we launch in June



Wingate Park WBA apiary

by John Burnet

Following a generous donation of surplus hive-ware early last year from a member who was downsizing for health reasons, it was decided to use the gear to establish a second Club apiary in the Hutt Valley. This would better meet the training and hive familiarisation requirements for new beekeepers particularly those in the Hutt Valley who often found the 20–40 km trek to Chartwell field days off-putting or time wasting. Club members Richard Braczek and Stewart Turner were already providing some beekeeping workshops at various members' sites around the Hutt Valley but liked the idea of a central site where both groups could inspect Club hives on a regular basis.

After several months searching for a suitable site sufficient to locate 10- 20 hives outside the residential area club member Kevin Westerby suggested Wingate Park, an old Hutt City Council landfill site (closed 50 years ago) on the eastern hills behind Moore Wilsons, Lower Hutt. Following submission of a business case, HCC eventually agreed to lease 185m² of the park to the Club for a nominal amount and the adjoining occupier Capital Model Racing Club were also happy for the Club to become neighbours (approx 100-200m away). We consider the site is ideal – levelled grassed area with plenty of parking, surrounded by regenerating bush and secure behind two locked boom gates and a 750m roadway from the street to the apiary. Great views over the Hutt Valley too!

So last month Richard and I moved all the hive-ware onto the site and with the help of a working bee of Hutt Valley members set up five donated nuc colonies. The plan is to extend this to 10 + hives over the next season. The Club has also purchased a 20 foot shipping container and this will be moved onto the site over the next month which will allow the spare unused hive-ware to be safely stored and maybe provide space for a work bench suitable for hive assembly and wiring/wax embedding workshops also maybe a bit of socialising if the weather is unsuitable for opening hives! All we need now is a solar powered bar-fridge!



Setting up Wingate Park apiary





Apiary site in Tawa

Owner prepared to pay

Tawa property owner has an easy, accessible site available for 2 hives. Prepared to pay going rate (approx \$320 p.a.). Levelled ready-to-go site previously occupied by Hutt Valley member who wants to consolidate his hives in the Hutt Valley. If interested, contact Gary Hudson - phone 022-630-5020.

Things to do in June

- Remove Varroa treatment if necessary (after 6 or 8 weeks)
- Render down wax
- Make up new equipment for coming season
- Repair hive hardware
- Check stored frames for wax moth damage. Freezing frames will kill wax moths, larvae and eggs
- Read about bees and beekeeping beside a warm fire while it is 10 degrees outside!





Book reviews by Judith de Wilde

Well this month I started with reading a book I had obtained a while back from the internet. One of those impulse buys.



Bee Quest

by Dave Goulson 2018.

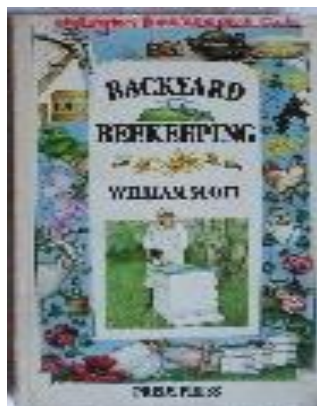
In the prologue he had me totally hooked with his hilarious antics as child, from collecting insects in his primary years to blowing things up as a teenager. Extremely witty and charmingly written. He however lost me before chapter 3. The body of this book is about Dave's (University professor) quest to find rare bumble bees. His descriptions of his beloved bumble bee are dry, each new landscape is given a comprehensive history overview with a hefty dose of

"save the bees" conservation. I'm sorry to all you historians but this just wasn't something to keep me engaged, especially with the "save the bee" hammering. It is well written, easy reading and is no doubt a book that I will again pickup. But for now, this one has found its way back to my bookshelf. As I did not finish, it is hardly fair for me to call this a review or give it a rating. So, we will leave it for another occasion.

I recently referred to one of my favourite references books, "Bee Keeping in New Zealand" Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 1975 and this verse made me smile so thought I'd share it.

"No apiaries should be set up close to manuka areas if the keeper intends to produce extracted honey for trade proposes."

Onto something I did read from our Wellington beekeeping club library for review.



Backyard Beekeeping

William Scott, published 1977

A simple, easy delightful read. This isn't a basic reference book I was expecting, it reads more like a novel. A novel full of information about bees. Unfortunately, some of this information may have been up to date in 1977 but for 2020 is somewhat mis-informed. Scott describes the virgin queen as yielding herself to just one dominate drone. Ignore the question of idles drones when only one is required. One of the

most entertaining pieces was the description of emergency queen rearing, were worker bees sense the loss of their "monarch", remove workers larvae from their cells and transfer them into hastily constructed queen cells. This aside, it is a book I would recommend if you have an aunt, cousin or friend who has expressed an interest in bees and they want a little insight into what is involved without the heavy reading. There is a lot of bee related information in easy reading fiction format. It is definitely not a read for someone who is about embrace beekeeping or an information soak personality as you'd have a lot of fine tuning ahead of you.

The hand drawings are beautiful but would be difficult to follow if wishing to use for construction of hive components.

The last chapter is dedicated to recipes. I can thoroughly recommend the honey cake. In true lockdown spirit I adapted it to the ingredients at hand and the result was delicious.

For the aunt

For the budding beekeeper or geek

Four Stings

One sting





Honey Cake

Here is my altered version of the recipe. For the original you'll just have to get the book out of the library.

- 3 cups self-rising flour
- 2 heaped tsp mixed spices
- ½ cup chopped cashew nuts
- 500g Christmas fruit mix
- 10-12 crystallised ginger cubes finely chopped – (*I love ginger*)
- 1 cup honey (*Ok I just scooped it out of the bucket without measuring, probably just over a cup worth*)
- ½ cup cold coffee
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- ¾ cup feijoa pulp/juice
- 4 hand beaten eggs



I placed mixed fruit, feijoa pulp/juice, honey, coffee and oil into a pot and heated until honey had become liquid.

Added the eggs

Added the remaining dry ingredients.

Baked at 160° in a lined tin for almost two hours. (*Convinced my oven is faulty despite being given the ok from an electrician. So do check, should only be about an hour*)

Happy baking

But the honey cake deserves 5 stings



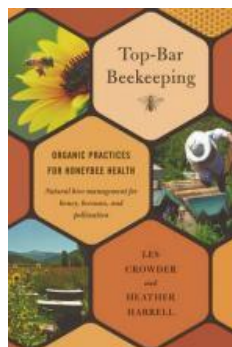
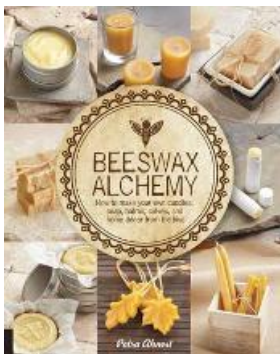
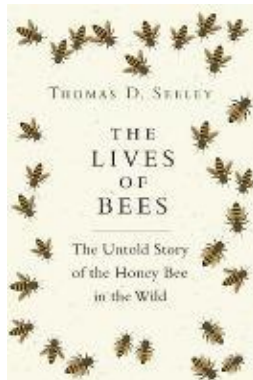
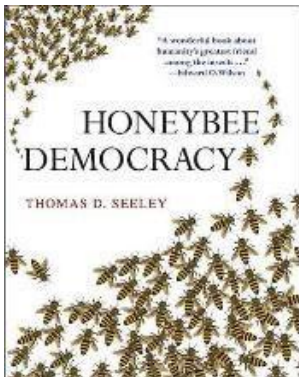


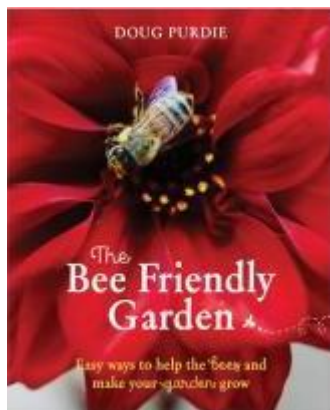
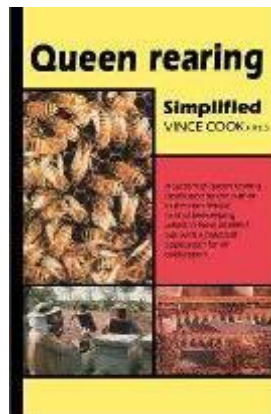
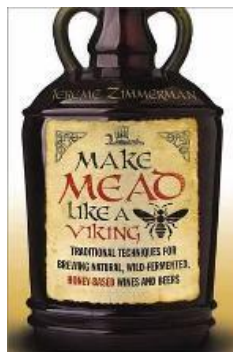
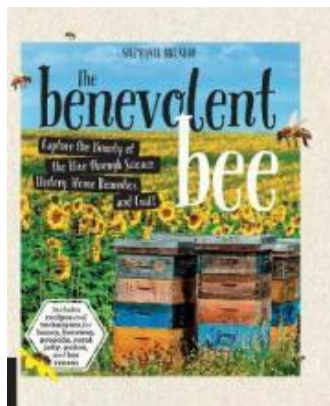
I wish to finish with an extract from a 1905 book, **“The Life of the Bee”** by **Maurice Maeterlinck**. A scientist, personal slant on bee behaviour observations. I have found his style delightful.

“Why do they thus renounce sleep, the delights of honey and love, and the exquisite leisure enjoyed, for instance, by their winged brother, the butterfly? Why not live as he lives? It is not hunger that urges them on. Two or three flowers suffice for their nourishment, and in one hour they will visit two to three hundred, to gather a treasure whose sweetness they never will taste.”

Thank you to the humble worker bee for not being a butterfly

To finish - It is very exciting; we have received the addition of ten new library books to add to our collection.





Covid-19 has impacted on meetings and the usual library stand for access to library material. If you are happy to travel to Moonshine Road, Haywards Hill end please feel free to call me on 04 2358173 after 7pm and we can organise loaning/returning of books until meeting are able to start up again.

Cheers Judith



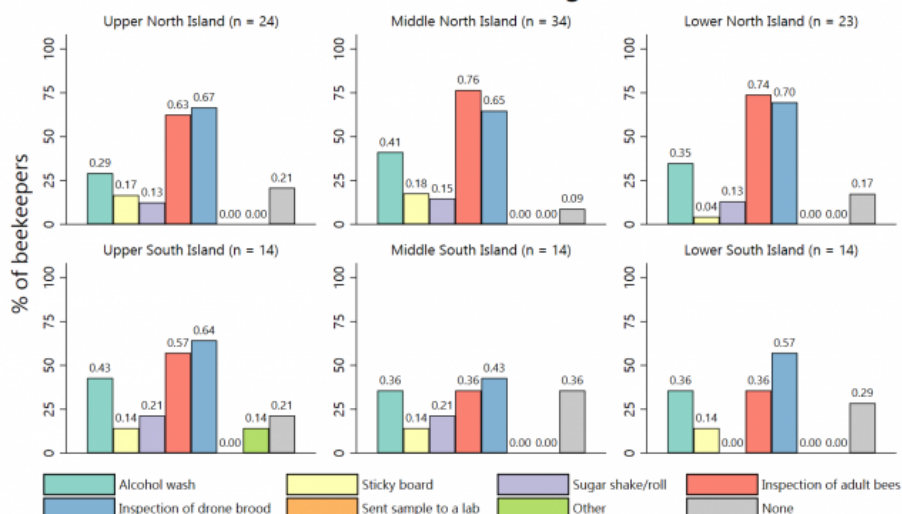
APICULTURE NEW ZEALAND

From the CE Karin Kos

Action taken on illegal honey advertising from the US

This week we became aware of an advertisement on Stuff.co.nz for Raw Unfiltered honey from the US. We reported this to the MPI Biosecurity incursion investigation team, who acted immediately to determine the source. They will be making contact with the honey company offering the product in the US to advise on its illegality and will also be following up with Stuff. MPI reiterated they do not want anyone to think they can buy raw unfiltered honey from overseas. If you become aware of any similar offering or concern about the possibility of imported honey reaching New Zealand, call MPI's Biosecurity hotline 0800 80 99 66.

Methods for monitoring varroa



Regional reporting for beekeepers with 251+ colonies
Colonies as of 1 June 2019
2019 NZ Colony Loss Survey - Manaaki Whenua



FutureBees launch Online Beekeeper Discussion Group

The team of FutureBees NZ would like to invite all New Zealand beekeepers to participate in bi-weekly **online discussion groups**. Since we cannot rely on coming physically together to exchange knowledge in discussion groups or at conference in this brave new world, we want to give Kiwi beekeepers a new platform to do this - online!

The FutureBees NZ discussion groups will be held for a trial period of two months over June and July 2020, with bi-weekly meetings starting on Wednesday, June 10th. The meetings aim to be held for 90minutes, with the potential to extend if we are in a particularly good discussion.

The topic for the first meeting held on **Wednesday, June 10th, 3:30-5pm** will be: **What can we learn from Covid19 about disease management in our own hives?** Some of the things we will be talking about will include:

- The power of knowledge – The importance of testing in disease management
- Are there alternatives to vaccines in disease prevention?
- Traceability in the context of Covid19 contact tracing

For more information, check [here](#). To sign up for the first discussion group meeting, please go [here](#).



Interesting websites

Bumblebees bite plants – contributed by John Carter

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/bumblebees-bite-plants-to-force-them-to-flower-seriously/>

from Dave Henderson

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-science-behind-honeys-eternal-shelf-life-1218690/>

Article by Julia Kasper, Curator Invertebrates at Te Papa and a hobbyist beekeeper in Ngaio.

<https://www.friendsoftopapa.org.nz/features/exclusive-bumble-bees-pollen-insights/>

What Do We Know About Kānuka Honey?

Honey from kānuka, a distant relative of mānuka, has received less attention than mānuka despite also having some unique properties. We wrote an article about kānuka honey in the February edition of the New Zealand Beekeeper. You can download the following article.



[Kānuka article NZ Bkpr Feb 2020](#)



Who can I speak to?

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Frank Lindsay – (04) 478 3376

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