



Next meeting | Wednesday 4th March 2020

Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

Editor | Eva Durrant edurrant@xtra.co.nz

Topics for March meeting

Beginners session

Getting Started: Rules and regulations, with James Withington

Main Meeting

Speakers : Karin Kos, Chief Executive, Apiculture NZ

Libby Bennett, a beekeeper from Ireland

Contents

- 2 Club profile – Judith de Wilde
- 3 Libby Bennett – March speaker
- 4 Honey competition rules
- 5 March checklist
- 6 Book Review – A Honeybee Heart has Five Openings, by Helen Jukes
- 8 Apiculture NZ monthly report
- 9 Book Review – Beekeeping in New Zealand, by T S Winter
- 10 Camp Rangi
- 14 Who can I speak to?
- 15 Meeting location



Club Profile – Judith de Wilde

Club position: Librarian

Club member since 2015

Scary photo of myself in my newly acquired ventilated bee suit and gloves. I was hard pressed to find a bee related photo of me in my collection.



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 a hive in my back yard and waiting to harvest honey. I loved everything about my bees, so as a novice beekeeper, 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.

I have also completed the Telford certificate in Apiculture Knowledge, regularly attend the APINZ industry conferences and the Southern North Island Camp Rangi education weekends to broaden my knowledge/skills.

Gradually those limited skills improved. *(One thing I learned early; the learning never stops. No matter how much you read, dot the i's and cross the t's, those bees are guaranteed to add to the education map)*

The concept of growing the number of hives I had, to test the waters for a potential income avenue from our block of land, began to grow. Into the picture came Trevor with his unlimited knowledge and support to grow this concept into reality. I grew from 3 to 20 hives. Unfortunately, Trevor passed away before the first season was over. I miss him dearly but if you can read this Trevor, thank you for getting me started. I remember Trevor reassuring me that it was good our land had a healthy covering of tuahinu plants, as these plants would be a good source of nectar at the end of the season. I told him this was a 'bunch of crock' as I had



Club profile (cont)



never seen a single bee on any tauhinu plant. We are having a dry summer this year with virtually nothing flowering (including no royal penny) anymore, except for lots of tauhinu. Well, Trevor was correct, virtually every tauhinu plant has both *apis mellifera* and native bees foraging on them. I'm certainly learning a new appreciation for weeds.

I have a long way to go and a lot of learning to enjoy, but I'm loving every step.

Happy beekeeping,

Judith

Libby Bennett – March speaker

Libby Bennet has been keeping bees on the outskirts of Belfast in Northern Ireland for thirty years. She supplies honey to a local farm shop, a nearby delicatessen & through craft fairs & church fetes.

Libby has won the Irish Beekeepers Federation Cup on a number of occasions & enjoys putting together beekeeping displays for the annual honey show.

She describes herself as a hobby beekeeper and will talk about a typical beekeeping year in Northern Ireland.



Honey Competition Rules

A reminder that the WBA honey competition will be held at April meeting

The aim of this competition is to get members to prepare and present a sample of their own honey. A cup is awarded to the winner of the liquid honey class.

There are three classes in the competition:

1. **Liquid Honey.** This is the standard honey produced from extraction. The emphasis is on quality of presentation, it is not about the taste of the honey. Ensure that there are no air bubbles, particles, granulation, and suitably low water content.
2. **Creamed Honey.** The emphasis is once again on presentation, with the aim being to have a smooth and consistent texture to the honey.
3. **Comb Honey.** Entries to be a frame of honey that would be suitable for cutting and packing as comb honey. Emphasis is on the presentation of the frame. Please bring a complete frame.

Conditions of entry:

1. Entries in classes 1 and 2 are to be presented in a clear, glass jar (around 350ml) with a well-fitting lid. Entries in class 3 are to consist of a complete frame (either full, $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ depth).
2. No labels or markings on the jar or lid for entries in classes 1 and 2. The frame in class 3 should also be clear of any identifying marks.
3. There is a limit of one entry per member for each class.

Tips and advice:

- The secret in this competition is to take great care in filtering your honey to remove impurities and to get rid of air bubbles.
- The cleanliness and clarity of the container is also important.
- Start only with the best honey that has low moisture content (so that it will keep).



Honey competition rules... cont.

- Judges' comments from previous years have indicated a high standard of entries, but there have been some recurring problems with impurities such as bee's legs, air bubbles and high levels of moisture. Pay particular attention to these things to come up with a winning standard of entry.
- Prepare more than one entry and select the best for the competition.



March Checklist

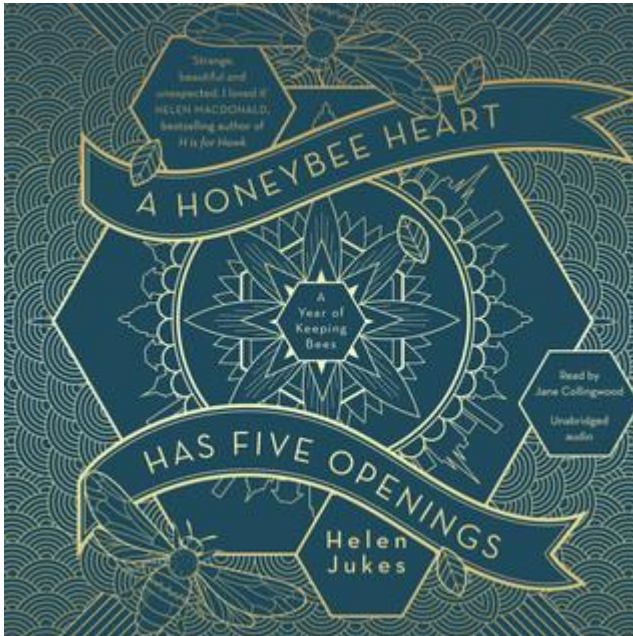
- Test for varroa mite levels and treat if necessary
- Extract honey
- Requeen hives
- Check for wasp damage
- Sell or store honey crop
- Store honey supers or return to hives



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



Book Review – by Judith de Wilde



A Honeybee Heart has Five Openings - A year of keeping bees by Helen Jukes – published 2018

Helen Jukes' strangely titled beekeeping memoir book, "A Honeybee Heart has Five Openings", uses nature/beekeeping as the dominant vehicle for her one-year journey of self-healing. A millennial takes up beekeeping to compensate for the shiftlessness of modern life and a boring desk job – I couldn't help but experience a little sinking feeling at the outset. However, it was an unexcepted delight to read. Helen had me hooked from the first chapter with her infectious honesty and touch of humour. Helen, closing in on 30, moves to Oxford after several years of drifting from one unengaging job to the next – "I haven't lived anywhere longer than 18 months in the whole of my adult life." She takes a job at a charity, but is



Book Review (cont)

no good at “managing things like office politics and fluorescent lightbulbs and those desk chairs with seats that spin and spin.” While in London, she met Luke, an urban beekeeper, and found herself obscurely drawn to the methodical rhythms of apiary. Now in Oxford, living with a friend in a rented house in a grotty corner of the city, she turns back to bees and establishes a top bar hive in her small garden.

Sadly, I was horrified at some of her beekeeping practices, such as leaving comb out and not treating for varroa, organic or otherwise. I would be interested to know if she still has a hive full of bees. Helen’s memoirs use the images of the hive and bees as a metaphor for so much else going on in her life. Helen says that her approach to beekeeping is “focused on paying attention, becoming more attuned to the world around us, perhaps even adjusting how we sense and see”. The book seems to be about beekeeping but is actually a meditation on solitude and friendship, on urban existence, on the condition of a generation and on finding love. Helen initially presents herself as a solitary figure and yet comes to recognise the importance of her broad cast of friends, each of whom are brought to vivid life in a few well-chosen words.

This memoir was a thoroughly enjoyable read that I would highly recommend, but definitely not as a guide to beekeeping.

Four Stings





UPDATE – 28th February 2020

From the CE, Karin Kos

Call for honey samples for environmental study

New research conducted at Massey University is investigating the potential to use New Zealand honey as an indicator for our environment. [Recent overseas studies](#) have shown that honey sourced from hives near to major industries typically contain higher levels of trace elements than those sourced from more remote areas. While the amounts of these elements detected are extremely low and represent absolutely no threat to humans consuming the honey, they do act as an indicator of how industrial activities can leave a signal in the environment.

Massey researchers are investigating to see if we can find similar trends in New Zealand honey. If found, this would allow New Zealand to harness honey as an effective biomonitor and could paint a picture of the distribution of trace elements in our environment. They are interested in taking small samples of honey from individual hives located in urban, rural and 'natural/bush' settings throughout the North Island. They will test the samples for trace element concentrations using Massey University's state-of-the-art equipment in the School of Agriculture and Environment.

Massey is seeking participants who would like to be involved in this research and who can provide a small sample for our analysis. If you would like you to participate, please contact Rebecca Hillyard, study coordinator at R.Hillyard@massey.ac.nz or (022) 656 2347

Karin Kos, Chief Executive of Apiculture NZ is a guest speaker at the March meeting. Members will be interested to hear about hobbyist issues and what is happening at other clubs.



Book Review – Judith de Wilde

Beekeeping in New Zealand. Author: T.S. Winter

Bulletin 267, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries New Zealand.

The Wellington Bee Club has three of these books.

Printed by the New Zealand government in the days when apiculture fell under the Ministry and Agriculture and fisheries stewardship. Printed as a comprehensive guide to beekeeping, prior to the publication of the “Practical Beekeeping in New Zealand” book and the varroa invasion.

It has a wealth of practical information to all things New Zealand beekeeping related. The tried and true practices that have stood the test of time and are still in use today. Information on queen rearing with in-depth guide to making your own wax queen cups. Drawings and measurements for hive component construction. If you have a touch of the do it yourself this book is full of things that you could copy or modify to suit. Hold a lot of information on extraction and processing.

If you are looking to grow beyond one or two hives, this is a book you definitely want to add to your collection. It is no longer in print so when you see one for sale grab it.

Five Stings





Camp Rangi

**Weekend 21 -23
February**

A good turnout for a weekend of valuable information, good company and good food.



Demonstration of detector dogs

We were treated to observe a short training session and a 'find' in the surrounding bush for the handler's three dogs. Training has started in earnest for AFB detection.





Stress free honey harvest and end of season checks

We were shown how to take off honey supers, check the brood and treat for varroa and then ready the hives for winter - by Allan and Kevin



Keep supers covered when taking off boxes. A stand for blowing bees from frames, bees were blown in front of the hive entrance with minimal disturbance.



Brood boxes were checked for AFB. Bavarol Varroa strips were hung next to brood. The entrance was reduced using the Bavarol silver packaging.



Participants practiced Queen marking on hapless drones



Queen breeding gurus, Kevin Gibbs and Allan Richard





Some WBA members who attended Camp Rangī



Sharing friendship and an umbrella



Deep discussions about bees?



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 editor

Eva Durrant 027 3118700 edurrant@xtra.co.nz



Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville

