



**December meeting** | 1 December 2021

**Where** | Johnsonville Community Centre

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## Topics for the December meeting

**Beginners session** : No beginners session this month.

**Main Meeting:** Christmas Social Meeting, including a food truck, mead competition and quiz.

Please abide by the following rules for this meeting:

If you are sick or feeling unwell please refrain from attending the meeting

You must scan into the venue with your NZ Covid tracer app.

Hand sanitizer will be positioned throughout the hall

Although not compulsory, it is strongly recommended to use a face covering except when eating and drinking. Face masks will be available at the front door.

Trellis tables will be set up throughout the hall to have your dinner at and use during the quiz.

Social distancing of 1 meter to be observed.



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## From the President

Seasons greetings, hard to believe we are closing in on the end of 2021. Another year of challenges accepted and almost conquered.

I am very pleased that we are able to hold a meeting this month. The committee has met and agreed that, with suitable protocols and plans in place, we can hold a face-face meeting. We ask that you are seated for eating and for the quiz, and that you keep the same seat for the evening. If you'd like to bring a contribution for a shared dessert, please do. We ask that you wear a face covering when not eating or drinking and that you observe social distancing of 1m.

In beekeeping news, the new WhatsApp swarm collecting platform has gone off with a hiss and a roar and is working well, with a number of swarms having been collected throughout the district in recent weeks. So just remember if you take a call about a swarm, and you personally are not going to collect it, please post details in the chat room, with enough details for someone to arrange to collect it. It is also providing new members with opportunities of learning how to capture a swarm.

As part of expanding the club's reach I have been in negotiations with other hobbyists' clubs throughout the country about information sharing. We now have a number of reciprocating clubs' memberships which means we will receive their newsletter and access to club information. This will provide us with a large pool of resources, suggestions to guest speakers and be across what is happening in the hobbyist spaces.

Hopefully we will get to see you all at our last meeting of the year, 1 December. This is designed as a fun social night with the Hungry Monkey food truck being on site, the annual mead drinking judging competition, the normal whacky quiz, and other games. This year I am introducing a 'guess the number of varroa' game, in which either the exact guess or closest will win a prize. Unfortunately we will need to defer the "bring and buy" until another meeting.



Finally thank you to all of you for making the clubs what it is. Whether you are a new member who is in their first season, or maybe a little more seasoned and providing help and assistance to others. This is the great thing about our club, everyone is prepared to help everyone and share their experiences.

Have a safe festive season, take time out to watch your bees in the summer sun and enjoy the fruits of their hard work in the form of fresh honey on your summer toast. And don't forget there is no January meeting and the next one will be Wednesday 2 February 2022.

James





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## No one knew they existed': wild heirs of lost British honeybee found at Blenheim

And here's a lovely article about ancient honeybee colonies that have been discovered in the oak woodlands at Blenheim Palace in England. One of the colonies is estimated to be 200 years old, and the bees have evolved to live with varroa mite. Hope for our colonies yet maybe...

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/07/no-one-knew-they-existed-wild-heirs-of-lost-british-honeybee-found-at-blenheim>

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## AFB Pest Management Plan webinars

The AFB Pest Management Authority is running a series of webinars and face-to-face meetings to discuss the proposed changes to the AFB Pest Management Plan. The proposed changes are based on submissions received during the first round of consultation.

There are no face-to-face meetings planned for Wellington, but you can join a webinar on 8 December at 6pm.

Get the details and register here:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_t8826SL-Suy1yAf1WcnD2g](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_t8826SL-Suy1yAf1WcnD2g)

You can download the booklet about the proposed changes here:

<https://afb.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=243d2c0e101a57a2d71a67e42&id=356d0d39df&e=f7fb38068a>



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## Nucs for Sale

Tony Walsworth in Karori (0278167202) has 2 nucs for sale for \$180 each. The nucs are 4 frame,  $\frac{3}{4}$  depth with good brood. Tony would like replacement frames to be provided by the buyer.

Get in touch with Tony if you're interested.

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## Queenless Hives

Several members have reported discovering their hives are queen-less. If this is the case you have a few choices:

You can unite the hive with a queen-right colony ideally using the newspaper method.

You can requeen using mated laying queens - these are now available through several sources or you can use your own queen cells.

Newly mated laying queens (cost about \$75) are currently available from members:

Matt Caldwell - phone 022-460-1404

Rasoul Shahsavari & Atefeh Fazel - Phone 020-4010-1529

An alternative is using queen cells that contain virgin queens however these still have to emerge, wait for settled warm weather when drones are flying, mate and successfully return to the hive - often a risky business.

Two virgin queens are currently available from :

Graeme Chisnall - Phone 021-126-8662 (these are supercedure queen cells positioned on the centre of the frame therefore a replacement  $\frac{3}{4}$  frame is required)



It is not recommended to use swarm cells for requeening as they are taken from hives with swarming tendencies so you are likely to breed a swarming instinct in your bees.

You can make up splits without introducing a ripe queen cell or a mated queen. In this emergency situation the worker bees select young worker larvae (ideally eggs), enlarge their cells and feed them royal jelly. However this system is not always successful for various reasons.

Nucleus colonies are currently available depending on age of queen (this seasons or last), supply of core-flute nuc box and exchange of replacement frames (cost about \$200-\$250) from:

John Randall - phone 04-476-9959

James Taylor - phone 027-378--0186

Steven Caughley - phone 027-422-8151

Cheers

John Burnet

Treasurer





# Book Review

## BEE PEOPLE

### AND THE BUGS THEY LOVE

Frank Mortimer – published USA 2021



This is a book written for the novice beekeeper but it is interlaced with plenty of humour and a tremendous amount of knowledge, enough to keep even the bee expert bee engaged. We follow Frank's beekeeping story from the first beginnings to his current expertise, meeting many of the interesting characters he has interacted with along the way. He passes on





lessons he has learned in this journey, from his first failed swarm-collected colony to his current successes.

Frank uses lots of analogies to form a better understanding of concepts for the non-beekeeper reader, such as comparing the Queen bee with a runway model and a Drone bee to a beer pot daddy with goggle eyes.

Frank uses his first-year experiences as a platform to introduce topics of discussion, but this does cause the text to wander, as he covers the stories of other individuals encountered and extensive details on learned facts.

For example, Frank brings the reader to his first hive inspection, but before revealing his findings he diverges to describes different strains of bees in great detail, introduce varroa, discuss bee castes and their roles. Likewise, his first bee club meeting wanders to the topics of colony collapse disorder, mead making, marketing honey and introduces the queen, before returning back to the meeting and its interesting members.

We are introduced to the one-eyed beekeeper, Rusty, and his eccentric ways which includes Apitherapy practice from his home kitchen. To think people will pay to be stung!

Frank stresses the need to use a smoker, using a poor new-bee beekeeper Rupert's nasty experience as an example to why it is so important. Frank dedicates a number of pages to Varroa, including the need for varroa monitoring with alcohol washes and the importance of varroa treatments. He even touches on the truly bizarre ideas for varroa control, which of course are not recommended but his telling is entertaining.

The text is full of fantastic tips for novices like how to inspect a frame for eggs, what to do when stung, how to deal with a queen-less hive and laying worker management strategies, to mention a few.

There is a lot of detail about smokers and hive tools. There are a lot of queen bee facts for the novice. Learn the difference between a Piping Hive and a Roaring Hive and what this means.



For the mathematicians, the bee maths to making honey is fascinating reading.

Hints include titbits that were new to me like, coating the inside of brood boxes with propolis mixture or encouraging bees to lay propolis themselves by roughening the inside of brood box walls. Apparently, this improves disease resistance and hive health. Another hint is squashing an old Queen (being removed from the hive for replacement), onto the introduction cage of the new replacement Queen, mashing the deceased body into the cage, to mix pheromones of old with new. Successful colony acceptance is virtually guaranteed with this method of new queen introduction. I would like to hear some experienced beekeepers' thoughts on this practice.

At times the text can be a tad simplistic, targeting a non-scholar reader. So, look out for the highlighted "Bee Nerd Alert" boxes to catch more detailed information.

I'm not sure I agree with Frank's manner for removing bees from the honey supers in preparation for extraction. This is the wonderful thing about beekeeping. The more you read, learn and mingle with beekeepers, the more you realise that there is more than one way to achieve a desired outcome. There is an old adage that says if you ask two beekeepers about what to do, you'll get three answers. I love this about beekeeping.

As a new beekeeper Frank found his local club meeting uninformative. It was a surprise to read Frank's brutal analyses of local bee club members in his early experiences of beekeeping. He leaves out no punches and I'm certain that there must be bruised individuals for being portrayed in this manner. In his words, "experienced old-timer beekeepers would be helpful, but only to a point". He turned to the internet but this proved challenging to obtain reliable information despite its abundance of sites to view. This led onto him attending regional meetings, reading journals, and studying university courses to quench his thirst for evidence-based knowledge.

Go on to read about how Frank and Rick transformed a disorganised local monthly bee club meeting, attended by a few "grumpy old-timer men" into



a corporate modelled meeting attended by hundred's, in a lecture stadium with a calendar of advertised events and key note speakers.

Frank clearly holds a strong self-belief in his expertise. Not holding back on criticism of other beekeepers' mistakes or those not on the same parallel thinking as his own, using phrases like, "not the sharpest knife in the draw" and "the intelligence of a bowling ball".

Frank does attempt to soften his approach by detailing some of his own laughable mistakes. Just be happy we do not have to deal with skunks.

Beekeepers tend to be made-up of a wide array of interesting personalities; non-conformists with a caring nature. It takes a special type of person to care for wild stinging insects that will not love you back. This book contains many of these memorable beekeeping characters whilst delivering an informative, funny text full of bee facts and information, touching on all aspects of backyard beekeeping.

Happy reading

Judith de Wilde

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## Feedback on the Monthly Meetings

Its great we are finally able to have a face-to-face meeting at last, and hopefully we will be able to continue with them in the New Year. In the meantime, we have been using online Zoom meetings to try and connect with the membership and continue with some of the activities and speakers we would normally have face-to-face.



As this is still quite new for the committee, we are keen to get your feedback on how you think it has worked so far, what could be better, did you enjoy the online meetings, etc.

In January the committee will be meeting to plan how we proceed with meetings in 2022 under the new Covid Protection Framework (traffic light system). We would love your input into how you would like to see the meetings happening in 2022 also.

If you've got feedback or ideas, please send to James Withington  
[jwithington2016@gmail.com](mailto:jwithington2016@gmail.com)



And thanks to Janine Davie for the lovely Christmas bee photos!

Have a happy and safe holiday season everyone, may your bees bring in lots of honey.



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## Next Meeting

Our next meeting is planned for February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022 (No meeting in January)

The beginner's session will cover extracting honey and AFB checks. Main meeting TBA.

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## Who can I speak to?

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

**Vice-President** – Frank Lindsay (04) 478 3376

**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:**

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

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

Supper co-ordinator - Barbara Parkinson – (04 2379624)

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## Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd, Johnsonville.

