



Next meeting | Wednesday 2nd February 2022

Where ZOOM MEETING THIS MONTH

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WBA February Meeting

Time: Wednesday, Feb 2, 2022 07:30 PM, Wellington

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86985430866?pwd=TGU2clhTNWdnVXprci9lY0cyeFd3QT09>

Meeting ID: 869 8543 0866

Passcode: 995443

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Note from the President – James Withington

Unfortunately, due to the government imposed red light system we are not going to be able to hold a face-to-face meeting for this month. It would appear that 2022 as the Thailand people say 'Same, same but different' is going to be the theme here and I suspect for the next few months at least we will be holding online meetings into the winter months. We are intending to provide both a beginner's online session each month along with the normal main meeting. Shortly we will be canvassing members to determine if they are comfortable to continue with physically meetings during this time, which would be subject to the current social distancing and mask requiring mandates. At the end of the day the health and safety of our members is paramount.

Zoom Meeting
Wednesday 2nd February
7.30pm

Last week the committee held its first meeting for the year, where a number of topics were discussed as well as the agenda for the upcoming months' meetings. Included was the ongoing Porirua city council's aggressive enforcement of complaints about bee droppings occurring in their area. I have scheduled a meeting with the Porirua mayor and her compliance team tomorrow to discuss these issues and try and come to an accord for everyone. This issue is compounded by having five separate councils operating in the Wellington region, each with their own individual bylaws and regulations for the keeping the bees, but none of them aligning with each other. This creates confusion for all beekeepers, and we are looking at trying to clarify this. I have even approached Apiculture NZ and invited them to have their say in the matter. So, watch this space. I just have to acknowledge that Jim Hepburn has been doing a lot of work



in the background and providing some context as to the complaints and the manner in which the councils compliance team have been conducting themselves, so thank you for all your work.

The introduction of the WhatsApp swarm catching forum continues to evolve. To date an excess of 60 swarm notifications have been received and acted upon. I see this being used again next summer and during the winter months we will canvas members views of using this platform for the next honey season. One idea is to establish another WhatsApp chat room for members wishing to receive swarms, so that the two can align.

By the looks of it this year's honey season has produced an exceptional honey crop. From the various reports of beekeepers around the district there is going to be a lot of honey extracting being undertaken in the upcoming weeks. Just a reminder that the club does have honey extractors for hire, and these can be booked through John Burnett along with a token fee for a weekend hire. Please ensure you treat them kindly and return them in a clean state for the next person and to eliminate the spreading of possible diseases. All members are reminded that any honey taken off the hive whether it is intended for sale, supply, bartering or even gifting from the 1st of January 2022 must be tested for tutin. John Burnett has available medical specimen jars for a tablespoon of honey to be placed into and sent for testing to Hamilton. This costs a member about \$15 per sample.

So as mentioned - this month's meeting is an online one, it will be great to see as many of you join us online. I think our record is about 50+ people so don't be afraid to join in. Remember to put our microphone on mute and screening your face is optional.

James



Extracting honey – by Graeme Chisnal



Put an escape board under the honey supers a day before taking off the well-capped frame for extracting. The escape board lets the bees go down from the honey supers, but not in again, making it easier to take out the honey.



Take only frames where more than 75% has been capped (right). The frame below is not yet ready.



Where an escape board cannot be used, brush the bees off the frames.





There are several ways of uncapping the honey cells. A capping fork, an electric uncapping knife, even a kitchen knife will do the job.



When spinning out the honey, take care not to spin too quickly so as not to damage the honeycomb. Spin for about 90 seconds then turn the frame and spin out the other side. When you hold the spun frame against the light you will see the empty cells.





December Meeting



Renier Roets, Winner of the Mead Competition 2021



John Burnet, Treasurer and James Withington, President preside over the December Quiz Night. Enthusiastic and very knowledgeable participants easily managed the wide ranging bee and beekeeping questions of the quiz.



February reminders

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

Tutin Testing – John Burnet has honey sample jars for members to provide samples taken from honey harvested from 1 Jan. You can leave your sample containers in John's letterbox, or in *Eva Durrant's letterbox at 15 Hanover Street Wadestown*. Free sample containers can be taken from there too. 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).

What is Tutin in honey?

Tutin is a plant toxin found in tutu plants (*Coriaria arborea*). It is poisonous to people and other mammals. Tutin is a toxin sometimes found in honey. If you're a beekeeper or if you pack honey for sale or export, find out what you must do to show that your honey does not exceed maximum levels of tutin.

Understanding tutin and the risks

From the link below, download a PDF for information about tutin and its risks, and how to test for tutin in your honey.

Formation en INTER (apinz.org.nz)



Wingate Apiary

We currently have 5 hives at Wingate. One has a mother daughter combo and is doing well. Our strong hive superseded in Spring. Third hive has a failing new queen and is about to replace her. Four and five are new queens from a hive checked a couple of weeks ago, they hadn't managed to build up much of a surplus so we might not have any honey to extract this year.

Richard Braczek

Chartwell Apiary

Frank Lindsay and John Burnet have been active in the apiary during the hot January days. When I took the photographs, the grass had been cut and the hives had added honey supers. The apiary looked very tidy and prosperous. I did not take my suit when I visited on the 18th January and although I was thinking of looking around the corner at the nuc boxes, I was soundly warned by guard bees to go no further... and who am I to argue with a force of a couple of million stingers!

Eva Durrant





Wellington Botanical Gardens

Marion Saunders, the Education Officer at the Wellington Botanical Gardens, has set up a wonderful Learning Centre along with an apiscope ready for occupation by a swarm already with frames of brood, currently being cared for by John Burnet. In the next week or so, John Randall will undertake the establishment of the swarm into the apiscope. It will become a very popular feature of the Learning Centre, bringing more understanding of how bees build and live in the beehives set up by John Burnet in The Meadow which runs alongside Glenmore Road. These hives have been beautifully painted by school children.





Sugar for the winter or springtime

John Burnet

The Club has obtained a bulk supply of 25kg bags of white sugar. I appreciate few members are interested in feeding bees at this time of year however if you are likely to need sugar for sugar syrup over the winter/spring now is a good time to purchase. Small colonies or late nucs/splits may also need sugar syrup in the autumn to get through the winter. Autumn feeding should be done early when there are sufficient older bees and the weather is warm enough to process the sugar but not too early so that unwanted brood rearing is stimulated.

White sugar is the preferred sugar for dissolving in water and feeding in an internal division (frame) feeder or from a top feeder with a chimney cap or bracken etc to prevent drowning. Normal sugar to water mixing ratio is 2:1 - i.e. 2kg of sugar to 1 litre of water.

Cost is \$30 per 25kg bag (or \$1.20 per kg) which is about half the usual current retail rate.

These 25kg bags are currently in storage at Club's apiary at Wingate so please let me (or Richard Braczek) know if you are interested in purchasing and we can arrange collection (or even delivery if convenient for both parties!).

Please be in touch you are interested.

johnburnet@xtra.co.nz



Book review: “Bee Culture: The Magazine of American Beekeeping”

by Emmet McElhatton

Over a year ago, keen to find a print magazine (I'm sooo over digital offerings) I could regularly read that could give me access to a range of articles and viewpoints on all things Apis, I took out a two-year subscription to Bee Culture, one of the world's premier and venerable beekeeping publications. One year on (12 issues), here are my thoughts.



Founded around 1873 as *Gleanings in Bee Culture* by the American beekeeping pioneer Amos Root, the magazine has been in continuous print for over 148 years, only eclipsed in venerability by the *American Bee Journal*, itself first published in 1861. A pioneer in extraction techniques and equipment design and supply, Amos Root had a considerable impact on American beekeeping, particularly through his best-selling book *The ABC of Beekeeping*, first published in 1879 and now in its 42nd edition! (As an aside, Amos was also one of the first people to document and report at length on the Wright Brothers' early flights in

the pages of *Gleanings*). Amos Root's descendants still have a steady hand on the family business, now dominated by the iconic A.I. Root candle company and still publishing the magazine their Great-Great Grandfather established.



So, to the magazine itself. First, and foremost for prospective Kiwi readers, is that this is an AMERICAN magazine. The social and commercial context, the techniques and equipment, the environmental conditions, the scientific and regulatory framework, the flora, fauna and pests, even the written language, are firmly American, and therefore somewhat, and in some cases quite distinct from our own. The magazine does publish a lot of material, particularly scientific content, from and on other international sources and topics, but it is still very North American in focus. Does this diminish its value to the Kiwi reader? Not a bit, IMHO.

That caveat now aside, what can we find in the typical issue? To use an American expression, the magazine 'covers all bases', providing hefty material for the expert and novice, those deeply into the science, those more interested in the nuts and bolts, and those more stimulated by the prosaic and whimsical. The scientific approach permeates the magazine, the bulk of articles providing full references to a broad range of peer-reviewed scientific literature. While there are many journal extracts published that may be a bit much for some hobbyists or commercials to chew on, by and large, the majority of the science pieces are written in an accessible manner. An example from the July 2021 issue, "Bee navigation: sensory structures of the honey bee", presents this complex and debated topic in a measured and digestible format, all the while referencing the scientific twists and turns on this subject from the 1950s to the present day.

'How-tos' and bee-keeper practicals are another prominent feature, my 12 issues to date featuring very useful articles on topics as diverse as refractometer use (Feb 2021), using the 'horizontal two queen system' (Apr 2021), to 'reading a colony' (Nov 2021)...you get the picture. Naturally, nature is writ large over the whole publication, with pieces on flora and cultivation for pollinators a regular delight. Many of the bee-friendly flora featured are plants we either don't or shouldn't grow in New Zealand, but many articles focus on species common in different parts of the vast and climatically diverse North American continent that we do have here and maybe don't think about enough. Until my subscription,



I hadn't appreciated how important a food source the humble dandelion was to pollinators in many parts of the States.

To those of us only familiar with Italians and Carniolans, the articles on other bee species are fascinating (e.g. *Melipona*, the stingless Mayan bee issue Feb 2021), as are the insights into apiculture practices worldwide and through history (e.g. Egyptian mud hives issue October 2021).

Like any good magazine, *Bee Culture* has a foundation of regular columnists who bring their particular focus and wisdom to the broad world of beekeeping each month. I particularly enjoy: the "Bee Vet" column by Dr Tracy Farone, an anecdotal look at animal health and welfare; Ross Conrad's musings on natural and organic beekeeping and the environment; and Clarence Collinson's "A Closer Look..." column presenting digests of the literature on a particular apiculture topic (his July 2021 digest on 'Colony Defences' is a must-read). One point worth highlighting is that *Bee Culture* has a significant regular proportion of female authors, their writing being quite the more accessible to non-American audiences than some of their more, shall we say, 'colloquial' male American counterparts! I could go on but hope this has given you a little flavour of what this superb magazine has to offer.

A final caveat I must highlight to any prospective new subscriber from WBA is actually getting your hands on each issue. Since I subscribed, magazine post from the U.S. has been thrown into disarray by the global supply-chain/logistics problems we're all experiencing. I've gone a few months without receiving an issue, and then, a few months' worth appeared in my mailbox at once. I've found A.I. Root very responsive to correspondence and so haven't missed an issue to date.

Highly recommended regular read!



NEW BEEKEEPER?



ADDITIONAL
APICULTURE
NEW ZEALAND

The Kapiti District Council (KDC) has now published their new Keeping of Animals, Bees and Poultry Bylaw. You can find it here:

<https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/media/41110/kapiti-coast-district-council-keeping-of-animals-bylaw-2021.pdf>

The new bylaw comes into force on 1 January 2022. The main changes from the 2010 bylaw are amendments to clause 8.1 and 8.2 to reflect that KDC grants a license to keep bees to property owners in urban areas and the addition of a new clause to introduce a minimum distance of 10 metres for apiaries in non-urban areas from public places. A new section has been added to advise beekeepers of their obligations under the Biosecurity Act 1993. ApiNZ made a submission during the consultation period earlier this year. While our submission supported the proposals, we did point out an error in the bylaw about beekeeper obligations under the Biosecurity Act 1993. The draft bylaw incorrectly advised that beekeepers needed to register any apiary 'within 30 days of possession' with The Management Agency, when the correct wording should be 'within 30 days of placing hives on that site'. This error has been corrected in the final version of the bylaw. Link to ApiNZ submission on our website: <https://apinz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ApiNZ-submission-to-KDC-Keeping-of-Animals-bees-and-poultry-bylaw-2021.pdf>



Who can I speak to?

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Meeting location – a Zoom meeting at home.

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Passcode: 995443
