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From the President

Hello happy beekeepers.

Those who attended the last meeting would have to agree: Bruce and his lovely wife Christina put on a right royal day. Their hospitality was exceptional. Bruce's hives were very active and his willingness to share some very good ideas inspirational.

All the people that did not attend: you missed a feast fit for a king. Thank you all for the time in putting together some mighty fine tucker.

Bruce has kindly offered to host an equipment assembly day for new beekeepers. Anybody who would like more information can call our delightful secretary Sally. There is no date set yet as far as I know.

I remind you all to be vigilant; the weather has the girls building up. I removed my first swarm of the season in early August, from East Lismore. Check your brood boxes thoroughly.

Happy beekeeping. Roll on spring! See you all at the next meeting.

Robert

Last Meeting

The last meeting was held on 30 July at Wollongbar. Thanks again to Bruce Kemp for hosting the day. What a perfect place it was to host a beekeeping meeting.



NRABA Flow Hive Meeting

The day's activities included a meeting of Flow Hive enthusiasts, a talk on anaphylaxis, inspections of Bruce's hives, and equipment demonstrations in Bruce's shed. Thanks to everyone who helped set up and run the day.

From The Hives - August

The migrating apiary of nominally 32 hives has been moved to Rous, on the red soil where bees do well in spring. Most now have two supers above the excluder, and have undergone a thorough inspection of the brood boxes for American Foul Brood (AFB). None was found, but they will be checked again soon.

While doing this inspection, one or two outside frames nearly full of honey have been swapped from the brood chamber for nicely drawn frames from the honey supers. The brood chambers had between four and seven frames with capped brood, and the empty frames were placed on the outside of the brood nest.

A number of the 32 hives have been closed down, and it is instructive to look at the causes. Currently, there are 24 hives with bees, but two of these have no worker brood and no queen. They are being kept going by putting in a frame with brood from the neighbour on the stand, until they can be supplied a queen. These two hives have lost their queen, and have not been successful in breeding a queen.

Of the other eight hives closed down, two had AFB. The apiary is run on a barrier system, where every hive has four dedicated boxes with frames. The only transfer of frames allowed is between neighbours when necessary, and only after thorough inspections. This limits the spread of AFB.

Of the other six hives, possibly two were closed down because of grossly poor beekeeping – enough said. The remaining four lost their queens and did not succeed in making another. In total, that is six out of ten lost due to this process. Poor management played a role; if this was observed early, the hive could have been given a new queen and saved.

Once the hive becomes queenless or diseased, it dwindles in strength until it does not have the numbers to control the hive beetle eggs and larvae, and it is slimed out. Strictly, the hive does not die out because of hive beetles; it is caused by the AFB or queenlessness – and queenlessness is the dominant cause here.

It is often quoted that only 80% of queens return from their mating flight, and the figure could be much lower because of weather or birds, etc. Regular brood inspections for eggs are vital for picking up these queenless states early. Also, regular re-queening with a mated queen helps as mating flights are not required. Re-queening with a cell is not as definite, but at least the beekeeper knows when to check the hive to see if the mating is successful.

Brian

August Flowering

Not much change in the flowering pattern to report. We are still going to rely on weeds and ground flora for the main part until white mahogany flowers around October. There is still plenty of fireweed, and in some places billy goat weed. And mistflower is about to break. As far as I know, billy goat weed pollen has not been tested, mistflower has, and is not all that good but does add to the general mix. It gives some nectar on occasion; I once got an extractable amount.

I mentioned earlier that there were a couple of red gums budded near home. Eventually it occurred to me that I had not seen them flowering. So I whipped out the binoculars. No bud and no fruit. A look on the ground showed that they had dropped the bud, something I have only seen once before. On that occasion it was a very good budding due to flower in September/October and the weather had gone really dry.

No doubt most of you will have noticed the tallowwood flowering. It is somewhat unusual amongst eucalypts in that it flowers almost every year, but of no benefit to bees.

The general conditions have improved in the last couple of weeks with the bees agreeing and laying drones, and there is a reasonable shake of nectar. I have even had one hive, hopefully only one, with queen cells.

Geoff

Know the Rules

The rules for beekeeping in NSW changed on 1 July 2017.

NRABA members should have received an email from the ABA with a link to the August/September 2017 issue of *The Amateur Beekeeper*. It contains detailed information and links regarding the rules and means of compliance.

A copy can be found at the link below.

<https://www.beekeepers.asn.au/news/2017/8/1/the-amateur-beekeeper-augsep-2017>

New Equipment

Stephen and Janet carry stocks of most common beekeeping equipment, as well as pots and jars for honey sales. Please remember to order ahead to have your equipment ready for collection at NRABA meetings.

Stainless steel extractors are in stock – two-frame manual and four- or six-frame electric. Other equipment such as supers, frames, serrated knives, wire, tools, etc, are available. Please place your order via the contact details at the start of the newsletter.

The Fowlers will be hosting a 'Hive and Frame Building Workshop for Beginners' on 2 September 2017. Places are limited, so please phone to reserve your spot. The workshop will run from 8am to 12noon at 5 Robb Street, Alstonville, NSW 2477 (in the Russellton Industrial Estate, off Kays Lane).

Hives and Nuclei

Please contact Stephen Fowler if you are able to supply hives and nuclei to other club members.

News in Brief

Bees in focus in *Australian Geographic*

The latest edition of *Australian Geographic* magazine includes a feature on native bees and the cover photo is a stunning close-up of a blue-banded bee (*Amegilla cingulata*) in flight. Naturalist James Dorey, who grew up near Byron Bay, explained to the ABC: "Lots and lots of photos have to be taken and stacked together to get most of the bee in focus." See the results at www.jamesdoreyphotography.com.au.

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-02/macro-bee-photographer-student-snaps-australian-geographic-cover/8764248>

Bee boffins seek the perfect bee

A multi-million dollar research project, 'Securing Pollination for More Productive Agriculture', is aiming to protect pollen-dependent crops from pests and diseases. Led by the Rural Industries

Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), it will also look for alternatives to European honey bees. Field work has already begun on the blueberry and raspberry sectors in New South Wales.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-08-02/bee-project-to-protect-horticulture-from-impact-of-varroa-mite/8767470>

Call to help CSIRO collate records

The CSIRO is calling on volunteers to help digitise its records by transcribing specimen labels using DigiVol, developed by the Australian Museum and *Atlas of Living Australia*. "Our insect collection in Canberra holds more than 50,000 bee specimens... Each bee tells part of the story of where Australia's more than 1,500 bee species live, how their distributions have changed over time, and what plants they live on and pollinate."

For more information:

<https://blog.csiro.au/digital-bees-help-research-fly/>

How to make a bee hotel

The ABC's *Gardening Australia* program has advice – including a fact sheet and four-minute video – on how to make a bee hotel using an old television.

<http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s4701951.htm>

Peacock or Green Carpenter Bee

The bee pictured on the next page was spotted out in the field recently. It was noticeably larger than the European honey bee and was quite loud in flight.

Pictures were sent to Dr Tobias Smith at the University of Queensland for identification. It turned out to be a peacock carpenter bee (or green carpenter), with this one being the male of the species. Females are darker green, without the yellow hairs.

What's interesting is that this bee was foraging. In dealing primarily with European honey bees, it is easy to think that all male bees do no work. But

the peacock carpenter bee is non-highly social, meaning that the males are not fed within a colony and feed on nectar on flowers instead.



Peacock Carpenter Bee (Male)

The picture was taken hurriedly, using an iPhone, so the quality is not great. Images of this bee species can be found at the links below.

<http://www.padil.gov.au/pollinators/pest/main/138577>

<http://www.padil.gov.au/pollinators/pest/main/138578>

Thanks to Dr Smith for providing the information.

Keep Your Contact Details Up To Date

NRABA members are reminded to sign into the ABANSW website and check/update their contact details. The ABA website can be found at the following link <http://www.beekeepers.asn.au>. Go to the pull-down menu at the top right of the ABA's homepage.

The NRABA newsletter is now distributed using membership data held by the ABA, so please keep your contact details current.

Newsletter Submissions

Thank you to all members who contributed to the newsletter. Newsletter submissions can be emailed to northernrivers.editor@beekeepers.asn.au by the 10th of each month.

Photos are always appreciated.

Upcoming Events

27 August – NRABA monthly meeting, Dalwood

2 September – Hive and Frame Building Workshop for Beginners, Russellton Industrial Estate Alstonville

Next Meeting – Sunday 27 August

The next meeting will be held at the home of Shirley Ashman and Merv MacDonald.

Location: 536 Wardell Road, Dalwood, NSW 2477.

Time: 9.30am Flow Hive meeting; 10am for 10.30am group meeting.

Transport: Personal transport.

Directions: From Lismore, proceed east along the Bruxner Highway, along Rous Road and Dalwood Road until you reach the Alstonville to Wardell Road. Turn left, and the house is a few hundred metres towards Alstonville on the left. Alternatively, get there via Alstonville or Wardell.

Bee meeting signage will be in place.

Activities:

- Native beehive split
- Honey beehive/nuc inspections
- General meeting and lunch

What to bring:

- A morning tea item or salad to share
- Raffle items are always appreciated
- \$5 per head for morning tea/lunch
- Beekeeping protective equipment
- Chairs
- Shade/sun protection