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From the President

Hi everyone

We all should give a big thank you to Janet and Stephen Fowler for hosting the last meeting. It was a lovely Sunday morning looking through their hives. There was a good turnout of new and experienced bee keepers. It was great to see some new faces – and their enthusiasm. I would like to give them all a warm welcome to our club.

Lunch was fabulous. Thank you everyone for your marvellous salad creations. It topped off a wonderful Sunday.

Remember, if you have a friend who would like to learn about bees, our club's beekeeping course in August has a few spots left.

Robert

Last Meeting



NRABA Members Inspecting Stephen's Hives

The last meeting was held on 25 June at Hillside Storage. Thanks again to Janet and Stephen for hosting the day.

We were blessed with awesome weather yet again.

Stephen had hives on site for inspection and Janet had beekeeping equipment on display in one of the sheds.

From The Hives – July

The beehives were very quiet in June because there was a poor flowering of *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (broad-leaved paperbark) this year. This is a short budding, high yielding – of both nectar and good quality pollen – Australian native that flowers prolifically nearly every year in the Far North Coast. This year was their off year!

Because there were two AFB-infected hives in the apiary that were robbed out, the honey above the excluders in all the hives was extracted in an effort to reduce the chance of infected honey being fed to brood in healthy hives. The hives were reduced to two boxes ready for moving to the red soil at Rous later in July. This is known as an excellent area to build up hives in spring, with early supplies of nectar and pollen, and the flowering of macadamia orchards.

These hives will need continuing AFB inspections to detect any disease through spring.

Brian

July Flowering

Beekeepers can have a love-hate relationship with farmers (perhaps even themselves if they are

farming) and, indeed, with the forestry people. In the Richmond Valley I don't see much about except fireweed. The pollen is not particularly good, but it is useful, even giving a dribble of nectar on occasion.

In common with many other weeds we rely on, it may be slashed just when flowering, something that for some reason appears to have happened more on the red soil country than elsewhere at the time of writing.

George Roots told me of one occasion after a flood when they got a good crop of honey off Scotch thistle down the river. It was the first thing to poke its head up through the silt. Then again, slashers were not ubiquitous back then.

You will have noticed that the local wattles were flowering. Wattles are wind pollinated and do not give any nectar. Unfortunately, the local one is pretty useless for pollen as well, unlike some species over the Main Range which can be very good. A crop from Cayley's ironbark usually depends on the appropriate wattles flowering at the same time.

The love-hate with forestry is because they provide roads and tracks to access sites, but are inclined to cut down the very trees we love.

Geoff

Starting Out

There are many very experienced and knowledgeable beekeepers in the club. There are also many who are just starting out, and to whom the mystery and marvel of bees is still quite confusing and at times daunting. It is therefore a very special blessing that those that have all this insight, and knowledge and experience are prepared to put themselves out and train up the beginners. At times, I am sure that we beginners are a little frustrating and slow to grasp the essentials but our kindly mentors seem to persevere valiantly.

The first four-week bee course has just finished up with the release of some 15 or so 'would bee' keepers taking their tentative first flights. On

behalf of all of us, I want to say a huge thank you to Brian, Merv, Steve, Rob, Geoff (x2) and Tony, plus their spouses, for their preparation, and training and hospitality. You are all so generous and helpful; and we all appreciate your time and efforts very, very much!

If you have been wondering about how to find out the essentials of beekeeping, then wonder no more: there is another course starting in August. So contact Brian Window or Tony Lamont without delay – you will learn so much and the course is very much hands-on!

Bruce Kemp (baby bee keeper still under supervision)

Hives and Nuclei

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

Learn Beekeeping Course

The second (and last) Learn Beekeeping Course for 2017 starts on 5 August, and there are still vacancies. Members could give a copy of the attached brochure to interested friends.

New Equipment

Stephen and Janet carry stocks of most common beekeeping equipment, as well as pots and jars for honey sales.

Extractors, pine supers, frames, serrated knives, wire and tools are now available. Please place your order via the contact details at the start of the newsletter.

Steritech Trip

A consignment of bee gear for irradiation at Steritech is being assembled on Saturday 22 July at the home of Angela and Andrew Ware, 93 Spring Grove Road, Caniaba. The pallets will go up to Narangba on the following Monday.

We understand that there is a backlog at Steritech, and it may be a few weeks before they return. The assembly will occur between 9am and 11am on that Saturday.

The hives should be delivered in stacks of three or four boxes (eight- or ten-frame), strapped with an emlok to a migratory lid and a base. Hives must contain no honey (except stickies), no live creatures, and must be sealed against bees getting into the hives. The boxes can contain excluders, frames, stickies, clearer boards etc.

Smaller hives, single boxes, separate lids and bases, telescopic lids, clearer boards etc. can be accommodated. Unconventional hives can also be handled with prior notice. Small beekeepers who are not club members can also submit equipment.

Contact Stephen Fowler (0418 412 621) or Brian Window (02 6624 2864) if you wish to send up a large consignment, otherwise turn up on the day.

Brian

News in Brief

Mixed results from pesticides studies

Two research projects, one in Canada and the other in Europe, have shown that neonicotinoids can harm bees. However, the European study also found that some German bees were able to survive the effects. "We learn again: it's complicated," said biologist Tjeerd Blacquière of Wageningen University in the Netherlands.

For more information:

<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2017/06/should-there-be-a-global-ban-on-common-pesticides-for-the-bees-sake/>

Probiotics could help bees

The Canadian study showed that probiotics can protect bees from the toxic effects of pesticides. "A current dilemma in agriculture is how to prevent bee decline while mitigating crop losses," said Western University's Dr Gregor Reid.

For more information:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/06/170619101827.htm>

Bees evolve to survive varroa

Bees are using natural selection to evolve and survive varroa. "In Europe and America almost every single bee has got the virus," said Professor Stephen Martin, from Salford University in the UK. He believes it is only a matter of time before it arrives in Australia. "One of the benefits for Australia," he said, "is if we can understand what is going on, we can tell you what to look for, what sort of set-ups work, what treatments are needed."

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-06-28/bees-starting-to-evolve-survive-varroa-mite/8660318>

Copying bees could improve cameras

Learning from bees could help cameras and drones to interpret colours in different light conditions, according to scientists at RMIT University. Bees have three extra eyes on top of their head, called ocelli, which work with their two front eyes to sense flower colours.

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-04/lessons-from-bee-colour-perception-pave-way-for-better-cameras/8674868>

Swarms in the news

It's swarm season in the northern hemisphere. Last month, a New York beekeeper removed a 30,000-strong swarm from on a ledge in Times Square. Meanwhile, in northern England, another swarm made the news when it tried to take up residence in a car.

For more information:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bees-swarm-times-square-new-york-city-andrew-cote/>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-humber-40252990>

Native Bee Hives

Simon Morrison has empty Australian native beehives (OATH design) for sale for \$95. Contact Simon at simon_perm@yahoo.com.au for further details.

Newsletter Delivery

Work is continuing towards using the Amateur Beekeepers Association NSW member database as the sole source for membership data. Members are encouraged to sign into the ABA website to check/update their contact details sooner rather than later.

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.

Remember, if you want to continue to receive the newsletter and other electronic correspondence from the NRABA, it is important that your contact details are correct in the ABA database and your membership is current.

Newsletter Submissions

Thank you to all members who contributed to the newsletter. It would not be the same without our regular (and less frequent) contributors.

Newsletter submissions can be emailed to Newsletter_NRABA@bigpond.com by the tenth of each month. Photos are always appreciated.

Please note that there is an underscore (_) between Newsletter and NRABA in the email address.

Upcoming Events

30 July – NRABA monthly meeting, Wollongbar

5 August – Second NRABA Learn Beekeeping course

Next Meeting – Sunday 30 July

The next meeting will be held at the home of Bruce Kemp.

Location: 150 Lindendale Road, Wollongbar, NSW 2477.

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

Transport: Personal transport.

Directions: Travel east along the Bruxner Highway from Lismore towards Ballina. After the speed camera on Marom Creek Bridge, proceed up the climb (past the DPI entrance on the right), then turn right at the top of the hill onto Lindendale Road. The turn-off is beside the BP service station. Bruce's property is on the right, about 1.5 kilometres down Lindendale Road.

If travelling inland from the coast, Lindendale Road is the first turn-off on the left from the Bruxner Highway after the Alstonville bypass. Again, look for the BP service station.

Please do not try to enter Lindendale Road from Alphadale Road. The numbering is duplicated across the Shires and is quite confusing.

Most parking will be around the big shed.

Bee meeting signage will be in place.

Activities: Planned activities include:

- Hive inspections (subject to weather)
- Frame building and wiring demonstrations
- A talk on anaphylaxis
- Honey extraction (subject to hive stores)
- General meeting and lunch

What to bring:

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