



FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER

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President's Report

"I don't feel very much like Pooh today," said Pooh. "There there," said Piglet. "I'll bring you tea and honey until you do." —A.A.Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

Busy Bee - Arthur Askey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2skW43HNpE>

November was windy and the bees struggled to get out, all the nectar was going to rearing young. In December the weather settled down and while we were taking holidays the bees were flat out gathering their harvest. The flow was on and the honey poured in. At the club the stronger hives, were filling boxes quickly. Lots of honey for us to sell at the A&P show in February. (Look for details in this newsletter of how you can help!).

The sun shone and it's been a summer to remember, but now everything is drying up and the flow has slowed. In a drought the clover is one of the first flowers to shrivel, followed by other grassland flowers. It shows the importance of trees, with their deep roots they go on giving when the annuals expire, even privet is a welcome nectar source at the moment.

Honey has been around for longer than people. The current trendy diet is the "Paleo" or caveman diet, based on foods that people ate before agriculture. Honey is included in the Paleo diet. What a hero the caveman honey hunter must have been when he returned with his sticky bounty. However did he carry it? Over the millennia we have moved from hunting honey to harvesting it. Everyone knows honey, yet it surprises me how few words we have to describe it.

There are honey standards such as the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) – FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS – CODEX STANDARD FOR HONEY \(pdf\)](#), where honey is described by its colour (by comparing how many mm along a standard scale the sample matches from "White" though 'Amber' to "dark"). Honey is described by its electrical

conductivity (honeydew honeys conduct better than flower honeys), and by its sugar analysis; particularly the ratios of glucose and fructose and by microscopic analysis of the pollen grains found in the honey.

It is fascinating how pollen grains from different plants look different, but I am sure I can't taste the shape of the grains. Such descriptions don't really excite or make your mouth water in anticipation. Is it that eating honey is such a pleasure it is not polite to describe it? Like talking about your honeymoon?

My advice on describing honey in this 'land of milk and honey' is first to eat it!
As Dodie Smith wrote, "I shouldn't think even millionaires could eat anything nicer than new bread and real butter and honey for tea."

Dr Graham Dyche
President FBC

Hivemasters' Report

The hives were inspected on 25th January with Peter, David & Angus. We started at 10am and were done by 12. They were in a good condition and we mainly checked on storage space, supering up where needed.

I have been informed by my wife that the nectar flow is just about over. This comes from a very reliable source (a Kern Rd beekeeper) she met while sheltering from the second shower of rain for January. What a dry January we have had... so not a lot of nectar about.

Hive Status:

- Hive 1** 3 full supers, one partially full & eggs seen in brood boxes
- Hive 2** 2 full honey supers, another super added and 1 box of brood
- Hive 3** 1 box of brood and 1½ supers of honey
- Hive 4** 1 box of brood and 1½ supers of honey
- Hive 5** 4 full Honey supers, another super added and 3 boxes of brood
- Hive 6** 2 boxes of brood, 1 box nectar & 1 empty super

Top bar Hives

Inspection was halted after a slight comb collapse, ensuring David had a sweet offering for his lunch date.

As for my own hives; all the bees have been hanging outside the hives in this heat. I am praying for rain to start the nectar flow again & maybe I'll get a few pots of honey that taste awesome.

Cheers, Mark

Secretary's Report

Watch out for the upcoming issue of Valley Voice, featuring an article on our club. If you don't get Valley Voice delivered (it's a free monthly magazine), we'll have copies of the article at club days. Also, look out for our stall at the Franklin A&P Show on 21 and 22 February. If you would like to help at the stall, please contact Graham Dyché (gdyche@ps.gen.nz). We are also looking for help with harvesting our club honey to sell at the show. We will be doing this on Saturday 7th February. Even a few hours would be appreciated; this will give you a chance to learn more about the extraction process.

Beekeeper job: If anyone is considering a fulltime position as a beekeeper, there is an opportunity in Whitianga which may interest you. Email Joan joanleitch@iconz.co.nz

Honey Extraction: We are now taking bookings for the Extraction Room. Please estimate how many boxes you will have to extract and whether you are able to use the room on weekdays. Members with small quantities may find it better to join in with others, so that the clean-up tasks are shared. Contact joanleitch@iconz.co.nz

Tutin testing: The cost of testing can be reduced by sending multiple samples at the same time. You will still get your own results. Our first test batch will be sent away on Monday 9th February. If you want to be included bring your sample along on club day, Sunday 8 February. Cost is \$40 each.

Honey Jars: We also have a limited number of honey jars for sale. They are clear, square 500mL jars with white lids, and are available for only 60c each. No more than 200 per person, first in, first served. So place your order now, and collect at club day! joanleitch@iconz.co.nz. (We reserve the right to limit quantities even further to ensure all members are given this opportunity).

New Members

We welcome the following new members to our club.

- Ian Dallas
- Dean Edwards
- Stewart Jones
- Marcus Male
- Deanne Maule
- Nga Raukete
- Avtar Singh
- Mike Smillie

We look forward to seeing you at the next club day.



Help needed next Saturday 7th February.

The Club needs around ten helpers next Saturday to harvest and extract the club's honey so it is ready to sell at the A&P show on the 21st/22nd Feb.

This is a highlight of the club's year and it's great to get your fingers sticky and be involved. Starting at 9am it will take several hours depending on how much honey we get. You can start around 9am or take over at lunch time. To volunteer email gdyche@ps.gen.nz

Not all framing wire is created equally

By Peter Biland

A few days ago one of the club members was extracting honey from wooden frames strung with four wires to support the foundation.

When the machine was slowly speeded up it was noticed that the comb in many of the frames began to disintegrate and large pieces of comb ended up with the honey in the bottom of the machine and blocked the outlet at the honey-gate.

Upon checking it was found that the wires were very loose and a quick check showed they had stretched between 40 and 50mm. There was little evidence of the wires cutting into the woodwork. Some testing with fresh samples revealed an interesting result. See A below. By way of comparison, framing wire of different sizes and ductility was tested and the results are also shown below.

Sample A- wire 0.45mm (25AWG) 'Mild Steel' (This is the wire on the frames in question)

A sample 1278mm was put on a test bench and stretched 50mm with a tension of 4.2kg. When relaxed the wire had stretched 31mm. 2.5%.

Sample B- wire 0.57mm (23 AWG) 'Mild Steel'

A sample 1277mm was put on a test bench and stretched 50mm with a tension of 6.8kg. When relaxed the wire had stretched 16mm. 1.25%.

Sample C- wire 0.51mm (24AWG) 'Spring Steel'

A sample 1277mm was put on a test bench and stretched 50mm with a tension of 12kg. When relaxed the wire had stretched 9mm. 0.07%

Sample D- wire 0.45mm 'Spring Steel'

A sample 1277mm was put on a test bench and stretched 48mm with a tension of 11.4kg. At this point the wire snapped.

Sample E- wire 0.50mm 'Mild Steel'

A sample 1277mm was put on a test bench and stretched 35mm with a tension of 7kg. At this point the wire snapped.

- The results suggest that sample E 'mild steel' wire provides a more robust frame wire than the smaller diameter sample A, the latter being seemingly more stretchy.
- Clearly the grade of the wire plays a significant role. Compare samples C and D, both similar sizes but quite different results.
- It is unwise to draw a firm conclusion from these results, as there are too many unknowns-like composition of the wire; but the thicker wires and 'spring steel' wires may be better.
- The words 'mild steel' and 'spring steel' are used subjectively and refer to springiness. Mild steel is easily bent; spring steel is stiffer and tends to return to its original position: it also tends to rapidly uncurl off the spool.

Note. Some rounding included. Averaged wire diameters. Maximum extension of only 50mm was available on the test jig. No manufacturer's names were present. Samples C & D are old FBC wire ex storage room. Sample E is two years old ex Ceracell. Samples A and B are new product.

If you would like to contribute articles, recipes, photos or any other content for the newsletter or website, please get in touch we would love to hear from you.

Email John Burns @ editor@franklinbees.co.nz

Free bees for a new FBC beekeeper

Are you a club member who has not got any bees yet?

FBC is giving away a nucleus hive free to one lucky club member who is new to beekeeping.

In return we want you to write a short report in the FBC newsletter for the following six issues telling us about your experiences keeping the bees. If you are interested in this offer please email Graham Dyche (gdyche@ps.gen.nz) and in 100 words or less tell me why you should be the one to get the free bees!



Beekeeping Help Needed: Craig Johnston and the Sim Road Apiary

Craig Johnston has been a key member of FBC over the last decade. Many members will have first met Craig in his role as tutor for the FBC beekeeping course. He was club president from 2008 to 2010 and is currently vice president, a position he has held since 2011. Craig also runs the FBC Sim Road Apiary. Craig's work is taking him to the East Coast for a 2 year project and we need someone to look after Sim Road while he is away.



Not all members are aware that as well as the Cow Shed Apiary FBC has a second apiary. A few years ago Wesley College asked FBC to establish a second apiary to aid pollination on their land and Craig obliged and set up the Sim Road

Apiary. It is well set up on level ground, fenced from stock and has its own small equipment shed. If you would like to be involved in looking after the apiary while Craig is away please email the president gdyche@ps.gen.nz.

Bees in the News

Diabetic 'health honey' a reality thanks to nanotechnology and stevia

By RJ Whitehead, 09-Dec-2014

A new hybridised pollen, developed by a former Nasa scientist, can be fed to bees to create a new species of “designer honey” for use by diabetics.

Full Story: <http://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/Policy/Diabetic-health-honey-a-reality-thanks-to-nanotechnology-and-stevia>

Starving honey bees lose self-control

A study in the journal of the Royal Society *Biology Letters* has found that starving bees lose their self-control and act impulsively, choosing small immediate rewards over waiting for larger rewards.

Full Story: <http://phys.org/news/2015-01-starving-honey-bees-self-control.html#jCp>

Artwork with a Buzz

Auckland artists Smuts-Kennedy and Taarati Taiaroa have created The Park - an installation of beehives and "pasture paintings" across six inner city Auckland sites with the heart of the project in Auckland's Victoria Park.

<http://www.pop.org.nz/projects/thepark/>

www.makethepark.info

Full Story: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/arts/64607383/artwork-with-buzz>

Native bees quite at home in Botanic Garden

Garden staff have closed off the steps to the lawn of the New Zealand native collection to protect the small bees' nest of tunnels.

Full Story: <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/330182/native-bees-quite-home-botanic-garden>



AGM & Honey Competition – 12th April 2015

Remember that our April club day will be the annual AGM and Honey competition.

You can find the Honey Competition rules on our website:

<http://www.franklinbees.co.nz/more-info/documents/>

In the Kitchen

Honey Curd

This recipe will make double the quantity of honey.

Ingredients

340 g runny honey
2 large eggs
1 large yolk
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
Juice of 1 extra lemon
45g butter



Method

- 1 Put all of the ingredients into a small pan and whisk together over a low heat until thickened.
- 2 Pour into clean, warm jars and seal.
- 3 Set aside to cool.
- 4 Use as any other curd.

From: <http://timetocookonline.com/2013/06/01/honey-curd/>



Did you know that old newsletters are published 'an issue late' on our website at <http://www.franklinbees.co.nz/newsletters>

Dates to Remember

Club Day

Date: Sunday 8th February, 2015
Venue: At the club hives.
Program: 10:00 am Cuppa and discussion
10:30 am Open the hives

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Venue: At the club hives.
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10:30 am Open the hives

View our online calendar at www.franklinbees.co.nz/calendar

Venue Directions

The club address is 733 Paerata Road (State Highway 22), Paerata 2676, New Zealand.

Traveling on SH22 towards Pukekohe, the club house is on the left hand side. Traveling towards Drury, it's on the right.

At 733 there is a red letterbox and a driveway that forks – left goes to a house, take the right that travels 100m past old sheds and terminates at a turntable by a disused concrete-block cow-shed. This is the apiary site.

When visiting the site, please ensure you park on the old turntable, taking care that the driveway is kept clear.

When leaving the site, please take great care joining the traffic. Vehicles approaching from the right are not very easy to see.

Quarantine rules

To reduce the risk of spreading disease, the committee decided (20th October 2014) to restrict the bringing of any used bee keeping equipment (including gloves) to club days – the only exception is bee suits.

Where required, gloves and other equipment will be provided by the club.

This rule is not just to protect the club hives, but to also protect you from taking diseases home to your own hives.