



© Franklin Beekeepers Club

FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB

APRIL/MAY 2016 NEWSLETTER

President: Graham Dyche
1 Northvale Place, Pukekohe 2120
☎ 09 238 9854
@ president@franklinbees.co.nz

Treasurer: Graham Wheeler
PO Box 1082, Pukekohe 2340
☎ 09 239 1177
@ treasurer@franklinbees.co.nz

Editor: John Burns
@ editor@franklinbees.co.nz

Secretary: Joan Leitch
@ secretary@franklinbees.co.nz

Website:  www.franklinbees.co.nz

President's Report

Flight of the Bumblebee <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QV1RGMLUKE>

I am busy as a bee at moment. Summer has gone on and on, breaking records for warmth and just when you think you have got things under control everything changes....

There are lots of changes in the beekeeping world. In February NBA members voted to adopt a new constitution and on 1st April the NBA changes to become "Apiculture New Zealand". This is effectively a merger of the old NBA and BIG (of Federated farmers). The new organisation also aims to represent not just beekeepers but all members of the industry including packers, processors and suppliers.

A driving force of the change has been GIA (Government Industry Agreements for Biosecurity Readiness and Response). The government will only enter into one GIA with the beekeeping community so it requires that there is one organisation to represent them. Primary industry groups who sign a GIA deed have a direct say in managing biosecurity risk, sharing decision making, costs and responsibility in preparing for and responding to biosecurity incursions. If Apiculture enters into a GIA it will join other groups such as Pipfruit NZ, NZ Avocado, NZ Pork, Onions NZ and NZ Citrus growers who already have GIA.

Biosecurity incursions will keep happening. Varroa changed our beekeeping drastically when discovered in 2000 but other incursions such as the clover root weevil in 1996 and the Giant Willow Aphid (GWA) identified in 2013 affect us too. The Giant willow aphid is currently causing Franklin beekeepers problems as the bees collect honeydew from the aphids and make a honey which is difficult to extract, is poor flavour and impossible to sell. Even the bees cannot eat it properly as it contains sugars they can't digest.

Change is difficult to predict. Thirty years ago NZ had another honey which was difficult to extract and no one wanted to buy. It was discovered that this honey was better than others when used as a wound dressing in hospitals and that was the start of the current \$200 million/year Manuka honey industry. Manuka honey has become a NZ food icon around the world. Perhaps the world's most famous honey, certainly the most expensive. Its popularity and high selling price has driven a beekeeping gold rush. Last year alone the number of registered beehives in NZ increased by 68,000 to 575,872*. The number of hives has almost doubled in 10 years while the number of beekeepers has almost doubled in 5 years from 2,957 in 2005 to 5,551 in 2015. Hobby beekeepers like FBC members make up the largest group. 3,639 beekeepers have 5 hives or less. However the bulk of the hives belong to the large commercials. One third of all hives are managed by just 25 beekeeping enterprises.

Who knows what changes the future will bring? Like death and taxes, change is a certainty. Perhaps in 30 years' time we will be singing the praises of Giant Willow Aphid honey?

Dr Graham Dyche
FBC President

Hivemasters' Report

Hive 1:

14 Feb - queenless, saw 2 queen cells, introduced frame of larvae and brood.

31 March - handful of bees but seemed to have made a new Queen. She was small and dark. A few frames of honey from another hive were placed in there to help feed the bees, and maybe get some egg laying happening.

Hive 2:

14 Feb - dead

31 March - Removed hive. The boxes were placed in the freezer for wax moth control.

Hive 3:

14 Feb - thriving, 24 frames of honey, undersupered another honey box 3rd box down

5 March - harvested honey

31 March - ok, reduced to one box of brood and one box of stores - treated with Apivar

Hive 4:

14 Feb - didn't see queen, 16 frames of honey, brood and eggs

5 March - harvested honey

31 March - ok, reduced to one and a quarter boxes of brood, and one and three quarter boxes of stores, treated Apivar

Hive 5:

14 Feb - 7 frames of honey, plenty halted capped in the next box, lots of brood and eggs in the bottom two boxes.

5 March - harvested the honey

31 March - busy, reduced to one and a half boxes of brood and one and a half boxes of stores, treated with Apivar.

Hive 6:

14 Feb - one frame of capped honey, brood in all four boxes.

5 March - harvested honey

31 March - busy, 1&1/4 boxes of brood and 1&3/4 of stores. Treated with Apivar.

Hive 3 is now 2 boxes high, and the other three are 3 boxes high. Taking out empty frames and consolidating the brood and honey should help the bees to maintain the heat in the hive over winter, and defend the stores from wasps, mice and ants. The entrances were also reduced down to prevent easy access to the hive by intruders. Quite a lot of wax moths were seen, especially under the bases, so tansy was placed under the lids to dissuade them.

Robbing appeared to be starting while the inspection was happening, so the hose was used to get the bees to return to their own homes, by sprinkling the bees with a short shower.

Topbar hives:

The two topbar hives were radically different. The hive nearest the Langstroths is dead, and looks as if it has been robbed out. Wax moth caterpillars are moving in and causing damage to the wax. The other topbar hive is still very busy. The entrance was blocked up to help protect against robbing.

Sims road

Roger put Apivar strips in 28/3/16

New Members

We welcome the following new members to our club.

- Victoria Fray and Peter Withers
- Kinga Masztalerz
- Alison, Neil and Roderick Ritchie
- Jim and Kim Thurston
- Stephanie Vance and Ian Granger
- Danny and Laverne Blankenbyl
- Fiona and Kobe Ellis
- Paul Hansen
- Kenneth Mane
- Keith Rademaekers
- Michelle and Leigh Bishop
- Colleen Moir
- Ricky MacPherson
- Greg Paul

We hope that you will join in the club activities, and get the most from your membership.

Fragrant Fig Mead

Source: [Homemade Liqueurs and Infused Spirits](#) by Andrew Schloss ISBN 1612120989

Ingredients:

- 1 cup boiling water
- 3 chai tea bags (I used Vanilla Chai)
- 1 ½ cups honey
- 3 ¼ cups Brandy
- 24 dried figs, chopped

Method:

1. Add the water to the tea bags in a jug, set aside for 3 minutes. Remove the tea bags and stir in the honey until it dissolves. Leave to cool completely.
2. Mix the honey mixture, brandy and figs in a 2 litre jar.
3. Seal the jar and keep in a cool dark cabinet for a month.
4. Strain into a clean bottle and seal.
5. Store in a cool dark place and drink within 1 year.

This is a delicious liqueur for sipping on a cold winter's night. Cheers! Lydia Burns

News from the Secretary

New Membership System

Our club's new financial year is starting, and we have started a web-based membership system to keep track of members and subs. The good news is that half of our members have signed up already! If you haven't, you can register via this link: '[Join the Club](#)' which can also be found on our website, www.franklinbees.co.nz. You only need to join once, membership renewal reminders will be sent to you automatically.

The new system also allows you to book the extraction room, buy jars or honey, and sign up for swarm collecting. I will give you hints and information over the next few newsletters on ways this can be useful.

If you make a mistake and can't correct it yourself or have difficulty using the site, contact me on secretary@franklinbees.co.nz.

Notice of club AGM

The Club will hold its AGM at the next club day, Sunday 10th April. Please note that you must be a current financial member to vote, and we will be enforcing this! There will be some changes to the committee this year – do you want to be involved? Please contact Graham Dyche at president@franklinbees.co.nz or call on 09 238 9854 if you would like to come on board the team.

Honey Competition

Also at the April club day we will be holding a honey competition. Please join in and share your produce. You can find the Honey Competition rules on our website, and at the end of this document: <http://www.franklinbees.co.nz/more-info/documents/>

Club honey for sale

We are lucky to have some club honey available, at only \$7 per jar. Pre-order through the club website (log in and go to Tasks, Purchases and Bookings) and collect on club day. Tutin tested and processed through our own A grade extraction facility.

Tutin testing

Club members have taken advantage of our offer of composite testing. So far 33 samples have been sent off in 5 batches, and the results to date (20 samples) have all been clear. Don't get complacent though! We intend to send one more batch away, and the cut-off date for receiving those samples is 18 April. So bring your sample along to club day, or arrange to drop it off to one of the committee members. Cost is still \$39.50 per sample.

Honey tasting

We had a successful meeting on Sunday 13 March, with over 20 members bringing their honey along for sampling. The range of colours and flavours was amazing, considering that they are all from a similar area.

The people's choice award went to a honey from Waiuku Primary School, brought in by Trevor Bennett, while Peter and Dianne took 2nd place and Lisa Abernethy was close by with a 3rd. Congratulations

It Looked Like Robbing, - to me!

By Alan Harris

It was one of our warmer days, and if it were not for the humidity it could have been pleasant. Our largest hive had been hanging out on days such as this so I wandered down to the hives to see what was going on.

I heard them before I saw them. The air was full of bees. The tone to the buzz was different and when I got round to the front of the hive, I could see that they were hanging out already. It was only 10.30am. And then the clumps of bees began to fall from the hive entrance onto the grass. It looked like our best hive was being robbed!

The bees in the grass were very active. Smaller clumps appeared from the lumps which were dropping from the front of the hive. To me, it looked like we were in trouble!

The entrance to the Hive Defender base was choked with a tumble of bees; most trying to get in and some struggling to get out. I've also cut a space in the queen excluder to allow foragers to bring nectar back to the super, and by-pass the brood area and that too, was choked.

Time to put our robbing plan into practice...

I gathered up a spray nozzle, garden hose, fence standard and bamboo from the bean frames. I set up the mist spray to dampen down the entrance to two hives and hoped enough drift would cover the third. Everything checked, I left it to the defenders and our "rain" and gave everything an hour or so to settle.

Later, the situation had, if anything got worse. The air was milling with bees, all flying just out of reach of the spray, but the front of the hive was still concealed by a mass of wet noisy bees. It seemed like time for plan two.

Time to close up the entrances...

Last season, I found that two layers of gutter-guard stapled over the entrance worked well. Bow the plastic out over the entrance, and criss-cross the two strips to reduce the mesh size allowed resident bees to come and go, but unwelcome visitors got hung up in the gutter-guard. But my efforts here had little effect on the mass of bees storming the hive.

- Lots of frantic flight activity.
- Lots of drones on the fruit trees nearby.
- Attention starting to be diverted to the smaller hives nearby.

Call in Dr. Google. Could it be "drone eviction"? Was I miss-reading the signs? The activity was such that I felt I had no alternative than to shut up the hives. Thankfully, we have ventilated bases, so shutting up was a viable option.

Shutting up on Hive Defender bases was not a problem. I had some scraps of clear vinyl which I cut to size and stapled across all entries. Hive safe!

Hive Doctors in "summer mode" are a bit more of an issue as the brood box overlaps the base to give clear access for workers. The thought of stripping the hive to re-set the bases and shut them up didn't appeal, so the trusty vinyl came to the rescue. A "U" shaped strip was slid into the entrance and the natural spring of the vinyl kept it firmly in position. Ta daa! Rescue Number Two.

I completed the action by draping the hives in sheets and damping them down.

It was well into the afternoon by this stage and a phone call to my mentor, Peter Biland indicated that most of my actions were appropriate. I discussed with Peter the option of removing the honey supers as that would appear to be the root cause. Our hive check, the weekend prior showed stores building, two or three frames still being drawn-out, but no capped honey at all. So, in the evening, Lauren and I planned a rapid honey harvest.

I took off the whole super in one go, which I probably wouldn't have done if the supers were full.

Result; about 60% full of nectar and outside frames starting to cap, but no fully capped frames. The outside activity at this stage was less frantic and there appeared to be no fighting, and the drones had all left the fruit trees. A quick conference, (quite an accomplishment for a husband and wife beekeeping team) and we decided to put everything back the way it was and pull all the entrance reducing paraphernalia off.

An hour later, just after dusk, all was quiet. No masses of milling bees, just a few hanging out on biggest hive, which is usual.

Today, no issues. No clouds of bees in the air. No tumbling, fighting bees at the entrance. Just serenity!

So, what was it?

- Robbing? Possible initially.
- A weird season? Probably. We have a large field of mustard about 300 metres away and that had just been ploughed up.
- Were the girls so P'd off that their closest source of pollen and nectar had suddenly vanished? Can't tell, and there-in lies part of the fascination of beekeeping. You are always learning!



Photo source: <http://peacebeefarm.blogspot.co.nz/2010/10/robber-attack.html>



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

Bees in the News

Twizel beekeepers getting the front foot on varroa

Twizel beekeepers Peter and Ali Bell are having success breeding resistance to the varroa mite in their bee stock.

Full Story: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/77787342/twizel-beekeepers-getting-the-front-foot-on-varroa>

Auckland suburb abuzz as bees evicted

Beekeepers spent today at a south Auckland home removing one of the biggest feral hives they've ever seen.

Full Story (video): <http://www.newshub.co.nz/nznews/auckland-suburb-abuzz-as-bees-evicted-2016033115#axzz44d3uGn54>

Solar farms to create natural habitats for threatened British species

A project which could easily be replicated in New Zealand: The RSPB and clean tech firm Anesco to boost wildlife at solar farms in England and Wales will help species including turtle doves, skylarks and boost insects such as butterflies and bees.

Full Story: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/07/solar-farms-to-create-natural-habitats-for-threatened-british-species>

Organic honey is a sweet success for Cuba as other bee populations suffer

When the Caribbean state was no longer able to afford pesticides – which have been linked with declining bee populations – it made a virtue out of a necessity. Organic honey has become Cuba's fourth most valuable agricultural export behind fish products, tobacco and drinks

Full Story: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/09/organic-honey-is-a-sweet-success-for-cuba-as-other-bee-populations-suffer>

Feel the buzz: the album recorded by 40,000 bees

He's drummed with Spiritualized and Julian Cope. Now Kev Bales has joined up with Wolfgang Buttress and a beehive – to create a transcendental drone symphony.

<http://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/feb/08/bee-band-the-hive-kev-bales-martin-bencsik-wolfgang-buttress-nottingham-arts-theatre-be-one>

More News...

The Waikato Domestic Beekeepers Association and the NZ Beekeepers forum maintain a list of bee-related news.

Link: <http://www.waikatobeekeepers.org.nz/bee-news/>

Link: <http://www.nzbees.net/forum/forums/bees-in-the-media.16/>



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 AGM and Honey Competition

Date: Sunday 10th April, 2016

Venue: At the club hives.

Program: All entries to Honey competition presented before 10:00am
10:00 am AGM

Honey competition and cuppa follows AGM

Honey competition rules are online at www.franklinbees.co.nz/documents

Hive opening if time permits

Reminder : Dues are payable 1st April. You must be a current financial member to vote at the AGM

Club Day

Date: Sunday 8th May, 2016

Venue: At the club hives.

Program: 10:00 am Cuppa and discussion
10:30 am Open the hives

Annual Disease Returns (ADR) due

Date: 1st June, 2016

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.



FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB

Honey competition rules

Who is eligible to enter? – The competition is only open to paid-up members of the Franklin Beekeepers Club.

How are the points awarded? - You can put in one entry in each of the classes listed. There are six classes for honey in jars, four classes for frames, two for wax and two for alcohol. Each class has a first place with 3 points awarded, second place with 2 points and third place with 1 point.

Classes:

Extraction Frame – Select a frame drawn out evenly on both sides to make for easy uncapping and extraction. Frames should be drawn out wider than both the top and bottom bars.

Cut Comb Frame – Select a frame for clean appearance with no surface discoloration and no pollen. Comb should be filled right out to the edge. Frame should be of even thickness and not as wide as the extraction frame.

Heaviest Frame – Encourage the use of fewer frames in the hives and thus, more honey per frame and less work extracting. Don't worry about how the frame looks

Section Honey (Two required) - Presented in the small wooden or plastic boxes. Filled out to the edge, of even depth with clean white cappings and no pollen.

Granulated Honey - Judged for taste, colour and freedom from froth and impurities. Competitors to classify as *LIGHT*, *MEDIUM* or *DARK* with only one entry in each section.

Liquid Honey - Judged for taste, colour and clarity, freedom from froth and impurities. Competitors to classify as *LIGHT*, *MEDIUM* or *DARK* with only one entry in each section.

Novelty Wax – Something modelled from pure wax. Judged for art form and purity of wax. Use can be made of rubber moulds, candles, carving etc.

Wax – a 500g block of pure clear wax. Judged for purity and colour.

Wine – Judged by members tasting

Mead – Judged as for wine.

Tips:

- Honey (Liquid and Creamed) should be presented in clear 500g jars
- Frame should be presented in a clean super (with a mat or base and cover to prevent dripping) or Nuc box.
- When you have chosen the frames you wish to present, you can store them in the freezer to prevent them from losing too much honey and to protect them from wax-moth.
- Liquid honey can be kept in the freezer to prevent crystallization.
- Creamed honey is made by seeding liquid honey with 5-10% of creamed honey of your liking. Store at a temperature of 10 degrees and stir twice a day for three days or until it becomes too stiff. Place the honey to be creamed in a chilly-bin along with a frozen 2-litre bottle of water to keep it cool (a refrigerator is probably too cold).

Remember, the more classes you enter the higher your possible total score. The entrant with the highest score overall is judged the winner and will win the Big Sting Trophy for the year.

Good Luck!!