Next meeting | Wednesday 7th June 2017
Where | Main Hall, Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

We are never too old to learn!
Frank Lindsay explains how to raise queen bees; ApiNZ are consulting on their proposed National Certificate in Apiculture. Take advantage of the long winter nights and settle down with a beekeeping book or check out an amazing number of good *youtube* videos on many beekeeping topics.

- June meeting's topics

**Beginner’s session**: 7:00pm
Topic: Training and education opportunities, Q&A – Richard Braczek

**Main session**: 7:30pm
**Meeting chaired** by Sharon Mackie
Guest Speaker: Apiculture NZ CEO Karen Cos

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Frank Lindsay – a note from the President

Winter is on our doorstep. The ash, maples, popular and willows are showing their autumn colours just before their leaves fall. The days are getting shorter and distinctively cooler and flight activity is now restricted to the warmer hours of the day.

There was a good attendance at the club apiary's wintering down session where some got an opportunity for hands-on inspecting the hives. We checked them for disease and winter stores. Hives should be heavy and difficult to "heft" off the stand with one hand in the second box hand hold.

Two hives have only about half a box of bees and need feeding, however the others are just fine. The bees that were flying were still bringing in nectar and pollen which is why there was brood in the three middle frames in the second super brood nest. These are the bees that will take the hive through the winter.

Thanks to John and PK for assisting and all those that have helped at the apiary site throughout the year. You have established a really good apiary site. John has changed a lot of the hives' bases to mesh bottom boards so it's much easier to monitor mite fall. Now that the strips have been in for some time, we hopefully should be getting less than one mite dropping each day. This is the level we want to keep the hives at so they start building on the barberry ready for splitting in the spring.

As the sun gets lower we have observed that two hives are not getting any sun during the day so the pallets will be gradually moved on each visit to the south where the hives should get more sun.

It's at this time of the year we can see the effect the different colours of the supers have on the hive. Even in the sunlight, white coloured supers are cold while the pastel colours are warm, with the darker coloured boxes being even
warmer. This absorbed heat helps to reduce any condensed moisture on the inside walls. Painting supers white or with aluminium is for countries that have intense heat during the summer (Australia, USA etc). Light reflected off the boxes helps to keep them cool in the summer but here in New Zealand we don’t get that heat except in the central South Island so painting in pastel colours helps the bees in winter to some extent.

We also checked under the crown boards for moisture and most needed a twig under each corner just to allow a little more air flow to clear away condensation. We want to get to a situation where the middle is dry and there is perhaps a little moisture around the outside edges.

I’m definitely not a fan of the modern trend to have tight fitting galvanised or plastic roofs. These are designed for commercial beekeepers who move hives as using these means they can stack hives closer together therefore carry more on a truck. They just do not allow air flow around the crown board and too much heat is lost out the top of the hive. If you have this type of roof, at least put some polystyrene insulation under the roof. Trim away 25 mm at the corners so some air can escape from under the crown board.

Two weeks after the miticide strips or what-ever treatment you have used has been removed, monitor the varroa level to see that the treatment has been effective. Aim for less than one mite per 100 bees or next to no mites falling every few days on to the oiled monitoring slide below the mesh bottom board.

Thanks to those who organised and assisted at the home and garden show. Sorry I couldn’t attend.

I have been playing with different record sheets to record each hive's progress. It's not a complete thing yet but pretty close. We will put a copy in the newsletter to members to use.

Frank
Club Profile – James Scott

My interest in beekeeping began when we purchased our current property 31 years ago and I found that there were two beehives already on it. I thought that they came with the place, but after a few weeks a local beekeeper turned up and introduced himself as the owner. I expressed interest, so I was invited to look over his shoulder and puff the smoker from time to time. After a year he decided that he did not want to continue keeping bees, so we agreed on a price and he sold his hives to me.

I immediately joined the Wellington Beekeepers Association and went to the monthly meetings in the Trades Union hall in Marion street to try to learn more about my new hobby. In those days, the meetings used to have less than two dozen members attending each month, so I got to know some of the older experienced members and picked up knowledge about bees. I also purchased a copy of the excellent book "Beekeeping in New Zealand" which was full of really useful information.

Over the years, I have had my beehives in several different places on the property, but they did not thrive well until I moved them to their present location by the side of a disused vehicle track where they are sheltered from the winds and can get early morning sun. I keep two hives, as that generally gives me enough honey each year, although the numbers vary between one and three depending on whether a hives dies out over winter or I have a split or captured swarm to look after.

Keeping a small number of hives means that looking after the bees is not a time consuming job, so I remain enthusiastic about it and have time for other pursuits and hobbies as well. I have found that two hives will yield between
30 and 50kg of honey each year, which is plenty for us, as we go through about 2kg per month. I have made mead once or twice, and in fact I currently have a batch that has just finished fermenting and will be ready for bottling in a few weeks.

In addition to keeping my own bees I have been a long time member of the Association and have managed the website for the last 20 years, from when it started on free hosting provided by the Wellington City Council, through to our current site. I have also spent many years doing the newsletter and managing the membership lists, but with the significant increase in membership numbers over the last five to seven years, this task needs automated processes as the original manual operation was not working. I would like to see the club website further developed and new functionality made available to members, and am looking for more people to provide content for the site.

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**Bee Quiz - True or False?**

1. Queens are sexually mature when they emerge from the queen cell.
2. Virgin queens pay little attention to uncapped queen cells.
3. During the first two days of larval life, nurse bees provide the larvae an excess supply of food.
4. Queen honeybees lay eggs throughout the day and night.
5. Adult honeybees can maintain themselves on honey or sugar syrup alone.

*Answers on page 15*
Bee Cosy

Tami and I live at Worser Bay and purchased two nucs from Eva Durrant early November last year. One nuc was larger than the other and by April this year had half filled a fourth box, the other had almost filled three boxes. We didn't take any honey off leaving it for the bees for winter.

We noticed a month ago that the smaller hive had become a lot less active. After attending the recent field day at Chartwell and discussing it with the experts we decided to try insulation. I had a sailmaker run up a water proof thermal blanket with a strap at the top to hold the bee cozy just below the ventilation opening in the crown board.

Within a week of fitting them we noticed a marked increase in the foraging activity of the smaller hive and no condensation under the crown board. We have a robbing board and queen excluder between the third and fourth box on the bigger hive and are trying to consolidate it down to three boxes. We gave a bee cozy to Eva to try out as she has been a big help in guiding us through our first season of bee keeping.

(The small lump of sugar on the wooden floor is being used to attract wasps to a place where it is easy to stamp on them.)
Apiculture New Zealand National Conference 2017

Bee-ing prepared: Business: Knowledge: Risk

Apiculture New Zealand extends to you a warm and friendly invitation to join us at our National Conference 2017 in Rotorua. This year offers informative and inspiring speakers, including Randy Oliver from USA, and Yves le Conte from France. There will also be seminars, interactive workshops and an outstanding tradeshow exhibition, the largest ever assembled.

Conference 2017 will create the opportunity for you to learn, build on your knowledge and understand what makes this exciting industry tick. Your attendance will send a clear message of support to the many sponsors and trade exhibitors who contribute to this conference and to the wider industry each year.

The programme covers a full three days and is suitable for all beekeepers, non-commercial and commercial, packers, exporters and the wider supplier network.

Attendance packages range from one day to three days, plus the Apiculture New Zealand AGM on the 12th July; thus providing options for those who are unable to attend the full programme.

Diary 9-11 July 2017 now, and book your spot at Conference 2017
Easy way to make a nucleus colony if you can't find the queen

By Frank Lindsay

Splits or nucleus hives can be made during the spring as a means of controlling swarming or mid summer while there is a honey flow on and hives are producing brood to carry over replacements to cover winter losses.

We will use the OTS (On-The-Spot) Queen Rearing as outlined by Mel Disselkoen. http://www.outyard.net/queens.html

➢ On a sunny day when the bees are flying, go through the hives and select one frame of honey and one of honey and pollen, and two frames of mostly emerging or capped brood.

Compact the brood nest where the frames have been removed and put replacement frames on the outside of the brood super.

Shake or brush off all the bees from the selected frames back into the parent colony. Put these frames into the middle of a new super, (foundation or drawn frames on either side).

➢ Place a queen excluder on top of the hive and the new super with the selected frames on top of this, cover with the hive mat and leave for four hours or overnight. Within a short time the nurse bees will have rejoined the brood frames in the new super. The nuc hive is now queenless. (The bees realise this half an hour after the nuc has been separated from the main colony).

➢ Remove the nuc hive and put on a new stand, add a 12 day old queen cell and block the entrance for three days with green grass. (Make sure the bees have some ventilation or put in the shade or in a basement until the new queen emerges).
Alternative is to use a split board, (crown board with and entrance 2.5 mm wide by 7 - 9mm high) on one side. This saves the expense of purchasing an extra bottom board and roof. If a split board is used, the nucleus hives will remain on the parent hive. (The split board is used to replace the queen excluder but the entrances should be to the sunny side or facing to the back of the hive in a different direction from the entrance below).

➢ If you don't have a mated queen or queen cells, at the time when making the nuc, select a new frame (white wax) with eggs and notch the frame with the tip of your hive tool so that some cells with eggs do not have the bottom part of the cell surrounding the egg. I prefer to use eggs rather than a new larvae because you get a better queen if it's produced from an egg.

See - http://www.mdasplitter.com/docs/Helpful_Tips_For_Notching-web.pdf (I would have removed every other egg to create a gap between the queen cells). Feed the hive with 2 parts water (warm) to one part white sugar to stimulate the bees to produce wax.

After putting the nuc on its permanent site (or back on top of the original hive using a split board) wait three days before opening the nuc entrance. Check the brood frames of the nuc two days later (5th day after making the nuc) for capped queen cells on the notched area are cut out or rub out plus
any other cells started on the brood frames. Remove any intermediate queen cells so each cell is separate from every other cell.

Close and continue to feed the nuc with sugar syrup if there isn't a flow on, (nectar coming into the hive).

➢ Day 12 after notching, open the hive and remove the frame without bumping it (keep it up-right). Select the longest queen cell. See if you can shine a torch light through the cell to see the developing pupa in side. Handle the frame without jarring it or bumping it on anything and keep the queen cells facing down.

Cut out all the other queen cells. These can be used in other nucs. Just make sure that these new nuc have been queenless for a few hours before introducing a queen cell. Protect the queen cells by partly wrapping in oven foil so it can’t be torn down.

Leave the new queen/s to mate and start laying. Check after10 days if the weather has been warm (over 20 deg C). If not, wait another 5 days. If you don’t see the queen, you can often tell that you have a virgin queen in the hive by the bees cleaning all the cells in the middle of the brood nest ready for the new queen to lay in.

It pays to produce a number of nucs as not all the new queens will establish in their nuc. Make 20% more than you need.
Another busy week, particularly on the MPI manuka honey definition front with the last MPI public meeting held this week, in Wellington, on Tuesday. The meeting focused on MPI’s science and so it was not surprising to see a good contingency of scientists from some of the key labs that support our industry. This led to robust conversations around the methodology, the sample selection, and the use of DNA pollen test. MPI acknowledged industry concerns around some high-grade manuka failing the DNA test, and that they’re working through this to find a solution.

Here’s an important communication on this from MPI, please make sure you read it.
As we work through our ApiNZ submission, the principle of what the definition is trying to achieve, remains top of mind. We all want a definition that is robust, that is clear on what New Zealand manuka honey is, and what it isn’t. This is clearly going to take some more work and despite the serious issues the current definition has raised, we will need to continue to work with Government to get there.

Yesterday I visited New Plymouth, invited by Venture Taranaki’s Anne Probert, to meet with a number of local commercial beekeepers who get together regular basis. A lot of topics were covered, and not surprisingly MPI’s definition generated the most conversation. I also got some practical suggestion on how to tackle things like boundary issues and managing pests like AFB. I found the session invaluable and appreciated the frank and open discussion. While I know we have challenges I can also see so much opportunity in having one strong voice and organisation that can bring together the expertise and knowledge from our members around the country.
NZ Apprenticeship in Apiculture

The Education and Skills for Jobs Focus Group needs your help! Stuart Fraser, Chair of the Group, says they are moving closer to being prepared to offer a National Standard for Training (Apprenticeship) and would like to receive your comments on the proposed pathway and components below.

ApiNZ Draft Outline for NZ Apprenticeship in Apiculture

Core 2-3 Year Apprenticeship
8 weeks Level 2 Pre Employment
Year 1 Level 3 Certificate
Year 2 Level 4 Certificate
Year 3 Level 4 Queen Rearing Certificate

Potential for Development of Apprenticeship to a Diploma in Apiculture
Year 4 Trade Specialist and Mentoring Role
Year 5 Small Business course or Specialist Training

Learning on the Job - E Learning Technology - Primary ITO courses and Tutors -
Train the Trainer option

We look forward to your thoughts which can be emailed to stuart@naturalsugars.com.nz
Visit to Saint Francis Xavier Primary School

Jos van Herk, a WBA beekeeper, gave a talk about bees at St Francis Xavier School in Porirua earlier this year and reports on his visit:

The junior classes of 5 to 8 year olds were studying insects and bees and the school had requested the club to see whether a beekeeper would be available to talk about bees and show some of the gear, and I volunteered. When I arrived four very excited pupils helped me to take my bee keeping gear and materials into the classroom. I had brought my bee-suit, smoker, hive-tool and a box with extracted and waxed frames as well as an illustrated A3 folder with pictures of bees. The first session was with the younger class. The second session with the two older classes. They sat on floor in a half-moon around me. Both sessions were interactive with lots of time for questions and answers and took about 20 minutes each, which was the limit of their attention span.
I had my bee-keeping suit on which was not a good idea because I became quite hot. The highlight was when I passed an extracted frame around and they could lick their fingers and taste some Tawa honey. Both classes showed a real interest and came up with some good questions. I enjoyed the occasion.

Sarah Duignan, a teacher at Saint Francis Xavier Primary School made the following comment:

“Jos brought boxes, a smoker, beekeeping clothing, trays, honey comb and honey for the kids to look at, touch and taste. The students had been studying bees as part of an insect unit and they had also visited the Te Papa Bugs exhibit. They learned a great deal from the beekeeper’s visit, including being able to ask their own questions which was great.”
Bee Quiz Answers

1. **False**: This occurs about five to six days after emergence.

2. **True**: While virgin queens seek out capped queen cells when they emerge, they pay little attention to unsealed queen cells, and the worker bees soon discontinue their construction and care.

3. **True**: They supply far more food that can be consumed and the larvae appear to float in the milky white food.

4. **True**: Egg laying is a major function of the queen and she will lay between 175,000 and 200,000 eggs annually. Egg laying occurs throughout the day and night. Most queens probably lay between 1,000 and 1,500 eggs daily during the most active period of brood-rearing. The egg laying process takes approximately 9 to 12 seconds. After laying a number of eggs, the queen remains motionless, during which time she is groomed and fed by workers.

5. **True**: However, they also require pollen or a suitable substitute for the production of brood food.
Things to do this month

**June checklist**

✓ Render down wax
✓ Make up new equipment for the coming season
✓ Check honey stores by ‘hefting’ hives
✓ Feed sugar syrup if honey stores are low
✓ Check for varroa and treat if necessary

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**Last Meeting’s Minutes**

**Wellington Beekeeper’s Association. May 2017 Meeting**

Meeting to be held at the Johnsonville Community Centre from 6.30pm (main meeting at 7.30pm) Wednesday 3 May 2017

Chair: Carolyn O’Fallon

6.45pm: Beginner's session starts upstairs. Training and Education Opportunities – Frank Lindsay. 50 attended the session

7.00pm: **Supper** Available, Name tags available at the door

7.30-7.40: **Main meeting** started. Welcome. Carolyn chaired the meeting

In attendance – 40 members and visitors signed the attendance book. There was one new beekeeper.

7.45 -8.00  **What’s happening in the hives?**

Lots of hives need feeding, even though it is only May. Camelia, hebes, lacebark, salvias are flowering, some are early, others are late. Varroa strips should be removed, or repeat treatment if necessary.

Q. How long to leave a glycerine and oxalic acid treatment on paper towels in the hive?

A. Leave the towels in until the bees chew it out and get rid of it, but that may not happen in colder weather.

ADR needs to be returned by 1 June. Formal inspection needs to be done by 1 December (and checked by a DECA holder)

8.00-9.00: **Keeping bees video.** Randy Oliver video on handling bees. Main points - No jarring, move carefully and gently. Learn to work without gloves and eventually without a veil as you learn to handle the bees. Dark hair, animal smells will also put bees off.

Frank Lindsay. Look for Randy Oliver videos on You-tube. Fran also offered a few tips from his many years’ experience:

- Work slower as the day progresses, as bees are back in the hive and guard bees are active.
- Keep ends of frames clean so there is more room to move the frames around within the hive.
- Use smoker judiciously and keep bees calm with regular gentle puffs.
- Use unperfumed soap powders and no deodorant when working the bees.
- Select for gentle bees, not defensive ones.

9.00  Meeting ended
Apiary site available in Pauatahanui

Peta Hird is the executor of one of three family estates that own land at Pauatahanui, and is trying to find ways of making use of it and raise a little income to help support the remaining family.

**Aspect** - it is a large area of land (about 2ha) with some elevated areas, some sheltered areas, lots of areas with all day sun.

**Foraging** - there is an apple orchard across the road, and not far from plant nursery

**Access** - best to have a look at where the hives would go and work out access. Road access alongside property.

Contact Peta Hird at 021-149-2923  
petahird@hotmail.com

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Interesting websites

During the winter months we can take advantage of quiet hives and long evenings and read to learn more about beekeeping and watch on some great [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) sites:

**Queen Rearing:**  
[http://www.outyard.net/queens.html](http://www.outyard.net/queens.html)

**Render Beeswax:**  

**Get rid of wax moth:**  
[http://www.bushfarms.com/beeswaxmoths.htm](http://www.bushfarms.com/beeswaxmoths.htm)
Meeting location

Johnsonville Community Centre, Moorefield Rd

Who can I speak to?

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