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www.beesnorth.com.au

Newsletter No 9, October 2022

In this Issue

- Queen's bees hear of Her Majesty's passing
- Chemistry of honey and crystallisation, jelly bush honey
- Poduct review Swiss Army hive tool
- Native bees by Dr John and President Nick - AGM Minutes and nomination form
- Meeting Minutes
- Club Shop relying on volunteers and polite customers
- Bees on the Internet, bee trivia, Club officials' contacts
- Shop prices : <u>http://www.beesnorth.com.au</u>



The Club Shop will usually open 1st Saturday of the month. Please check the website for details

Queen's bees informed of her death by the royal beekeeper

Anne British colony received special correspondence about Ouean Elizabeth II's death last wook — not from Buckingham Balaco, but th

One British colony received special correspondence about Queen Elizabeth II's death last week – not from Buckingham Palace, but the Palace beekeeper. The superstitious and somewhat cute tradition of 'telling the bees' of a death in the family has been part of rural British folklore for centuries. It was no different for the death of Britain's longest reigning monarch.

How were the Queen's bees told?

Palace beekeeper, John Chapple, told Mail Online he travelled to Clarence House and Buckingham Palace on Friday to tell the seven bee hives. "I'm at the hives now and it is traditional when someone dies that you go to the hives and say a little prayer and put a black ribbon on the hive," the 79year-old said.

"I drape the hives with black ribbon with a bow."

Mr Chapple said he delivered the same message at both locations, in hushed tones.

"You knock on each hive and say, 'The mistress is dead, but don't you go. Your master will be a good master to you," he said. Queen Elizabeth II was reportedly a bee enthusiast. (AP: Andrew Matthews)





How old is this tradition?

Across the UK and Europe, many 18th and 19th century magazines, diary entries and paintings refer to the custom of telling the bees.

But the practice may have its <u>origins in Celtic mythology</u>, which held that bees were intermediaries between our world and the spirit world.

Why do they tell the bees?

Whether it is a birth, death or marriage, the bees were to be told about all important events in their keeper's lives. It was believed beekeepers had strong connections with the bees, so they deserved to be treated like family, and mourn them when they died.

The following stanzas from the <u>poem</u> Telling the Bees, written in 1858 by American John Greenleaf Whittier, depict the important practice:

Before them, under the garden wall, Forward and back Went, drearily singing, the chore-girl small, Draping each hive with a shred of black. Trembling, I listened; the summer sun, Had the chill of snow; For I knew she was telling the bees of one Gone on the journey we all must go! "Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence! Mistress Mary is dead and gone!

A widow and her son telling the bees of a death in the family (Left). (Wikimedia Commons)

What happens if the bees are not told?

In the event of a death, the bees were to be put into mourning.

This involved draping the hives in black cloth, leaving funeral food beside them and relaying news of the death quietly. But if the bees were not informed, or put into mourning, it was believed they might stop producing honey, sting their next keeper, or die. **The Queen's Bees**

Queen Elizabeth II was <u>reportedly</u> a bee enthusiast, and had a number of hives on the Palace grounds for many years. According to the reports, The Royal Family chefs used the honey in their cooking and sold any leftovers to fundraise for charities.

Chemistry of honey

https://www.beeculture.com/the-chemistry-of-honey/

Honey is composed of around 181 components. Its unique taste is a result of some complex chemical processes as well as the plant derived chemicals such as aromatic scents, and essential oils. Honey also contains trace amounts of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, organic acids, fragrance and flavour compounds – and of course pollen.

Honey consists mostly of the sugars glucose and fructose in a "supersaturated" solution. "Supersaturated" solutions occur when more of a compound is dissolved in a liquid than the liquid can normally contain. For example, when a large amount of sugar is stirred into a glass of water, some sugar is left at the bottom. That's because the water at room temperature can only dissolve a certain amount of sugar. But, if the water is heated, more sugar can be dissolved. These solutions tend to crystallise easily when cooled and have become "supersaturated" at room temperatures, or even more so at cooler temperatures, which is why keeping honey in the fridge will encourage crystallisation. Syrup, fudge and honey are all considered to be supersaturated solutions.

All honey begins with nectar (from flowers) or honeydew (exudate from sap sucking insects). Whereas honey is viscous and has a low water content, nectar is about 80% water. Nectar is a very thin watery solution- colourless and not nearly as sweet as honey. This is mainly due to fructose tasting much sweeter to our taste buds than sucrose or glucose. Honey bees produce an enzyme called *invertase* that splits the double sugar sucrose in nectar into the single sugars glucose and fructose that are more easily digested by the bees. Other enzymes added by honey bees include *amylase* that breaks down amylose (starch) into glucose. This can increase the concentration of glucose and alter the 1:1 ratio of glucose to fructose in honey and promote crystallisation. A really important enzyme is *glucose oxidase* which, when the honey is diluted, breaks down the glucose into hydrogen peroxide and acid. The combined effects of high sugar concentration, hydrogen peroxide and acid are the main antibacterial agents of raw honey. Heating honey will gradually destroy the enzyme and reduce the antibacterial effects of raw honey. *Catalase* changes hydrogen peroxide into water and oxygen. This prevents the hydrogen peroxide content from becoming too high

The problem with crystallisation is that when the glucose is separated from the honey and precipitates, the leftover liquid contains the fructose but in a higher percentage of water. Yeasts naturally occurring in raw honey with enough water and sugar can cause the honey to ferment. That's why honey that crystallizes may ferment more quickly than non-crystallised honey. Temperature can affect crystallisation. Honey is best stored above 50°F. Researchers have also concluded that honey removed from the comb and processed with extractors and pumps is more likely to crystallise than honey left in the comb because of the fine particulate matter introduced for crystalls to begin on. Other factors that contribute to crystallisation are dust, air bubbles, and pollen in the honey. Crystallization isn't always bad. Creamed (spreadable) honey depends upon controlled crystallisation. While natural crystallisation creates grainy crystals, controlled crystallisation creates a smooth and creamy product.

Heating honey can cause chemical and colour changes, as well. Honey will darken when heated due to a process known as the Maillard Reaction – a heat driven reaction between sugar and an amino acid. This reaction is why your bread and meat get a brown surface when toasted or roasted. Caramelisation is the browning of sugar, and is caused when heating begins breaking the molecular bonds in the honey. When these bonds are broken and then re-form, caramelised sugar is the result. Heat can also affect both honey and high-fructose corn syrup or HFCS. When honey or fructose is heated, HMF (*hydroxymethylfurfural*) can form. This can occur at relatively low temperatures (110-115°F.) through heating or poor storage conditions. Honey bees health can be seriously damaged if they are fed high-fructose corn syrup that is contaminated with HMF. HMF is also detrimental to human health and there are standards requiring low levels in food for humans.

Honey is *hygroscopic* which means that it will absorb moisture from the air if let exposed. This extra moisture in the honey will allow yeasts to begin the fermentation process. Normally, honey has a low moisture content (below 20%) which helps in preservation. If, however, its moisture content rises above 25%, it will begin to ferment. That's why collecting uncapped honey with a higher water content is not recommended, especially in the warm humid tropics.

Native tea tree produces potent antibacterial honey

By Katherine Nightingale • March 3, 2011

Some potent varieties of Australian honey for treating bacteria may well be the most powerfully antimicrobial honey ever discovered, say Queensland researchers.

The honey, cultivated at undisclosed locations in northern NSW and southeast Queensland, is made by bees that have fed on *Leptospermum polygalifolium*, also known as jelly bush or the

lemon-scented tea tree. The researchers tested 100 jelly bush honeys from a range of areas and found that some had 1750mg/kg of the antibacterial compound 'methylglyoxal' – the highest concentration yet found in this kind of honey. This is higher even than the concentration found in New Zealand's famed manuka honey, made from Leptospermum scoparium, a cousin to the myrtle tree.

Honey has long been known to have antimicrobial properties, and has been used since ancient times as a remedy for wounds. Interest in its medicinal use has resurged in recent years with the discovery of the potency of manuka and jelly bush honeys.

Unknown x-factor

Jelly bush grows all along the east coast from southern NSW to Cape York, but no one knows why only certain trees lead to the highest methylglyoxal



Leptospermum poygalifolium or "Jelly bush" in flower near Coolum on the Sunshine Coast. Photo from The Ed.

levels in honey, says Dr Yasmina Sultanbawa, with the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI), which carried out the latest study with the University of Queensland and two medicinal honey companies.

An additional unknown is how methylglyoxal works, she says. All honey has antibacterial activity to a certain extent, but only honeys such as jelly bush and manuka have particularly strong antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects, and they also seem to hasten the wound-healing process.

What is known is that methylglyoxal's antimicrobial potency is strengthened when it's taken in honey, suggesting that it acts in synergy with other components – this is an area the researchers plan to further study. "We're looking at the mechanism of action of methylglyoxal and also the other antimicrobial phytochemicals and enzymes in honey. This is just the tip of iceberg; there is a lot more to be done," says Yasmina.

Promising superbug remedy

Medical-grade manuka and jelly bush honeys are already used in ointments and dressings. The latest high-methylglyoxal honeys, however, have shown some promise in laboratory tests against the 'superbug' Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), which has become resistant to common antibiotics, says Yasmina. The next step is to test it in people.

However, Dr Peter Molan, from the University of Waikato in New Zealand, argues that a higher methylglyoxal level doesn't necessarily correlate with a better antimicrobial effect. Peter, a biochemist, discovered the antimicrobial activity of manuka honey in the 1980s and says the synergy that boosts methylglyoxal activity has been found only in some types of manuka honey.

On its own, methylglyoxal can kill some human cells as well as bacterial cells, but there is something in medical-grade manuka honey which counteracts this toxicity, says Peter. "With the Queensland honey, it is not known whether there is enough of the protective component to overcome the toxicity of the very high levels of methylglyoxal. A lot more testing would be required before it could be assumed to be safe to use on infected tissues," he says.

QAAFI is a partnership between The University of Queensland and the Queensland Government's Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI).

Product Review – Swiss Army Hive Tool

What is it? It's a heavy duty stainless steel hive tool with wooden handle – available from the Club Shop

What does it do? Well, like most hive tools, it does more than just jemmy open the supers. I use it for pulling nails scraping paint, and that's probably why I lose so many hive tools. This one has some extra edges for using sideways for separating brood and super frames, it has a stepped tong for lifting frames out of the box, and it has a round SS wheel that I haven't worked out what it does. Any clues out there? There is a grooved scraper edge for cleaning out the channel in frame top and bottom bars, and another grooved edge that can clean up waxed queen excluders, but I found the gaps didn't match very well. The sideways sharp edge is great for dragging along frame edges to clean off propolis and wax.



Pros and Cons Its very robust and can do a variety of things a straight edged hive tool doesn't handle too well. It's very big and heavy and all those sharp edges will puncture some delicate skin if you bend over or sit down with one in your pocket.

How much is it? \$25 at The Club Shop

Is it a worthwhile gadget? Yes, you will not lose it in the grass and it's too big to forget and leave under the lid in the top super, but beware of the multi angled sharp edges. It might even be more useful if you can figure out what the wheel does.

Should you get one? Why not, you won't lose this one unless your best beek friend borrows it – "just for a day".

Native Bees in Australia – article in "The Buzz" journal

Issue 6 September 2022 Newsletter of the British Bee Veterinary Association

By JOHN CARR AND NICK SMITH, PRESIDENT AND MEMBER, TOWNSVILLE & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION, QUEENSLAND

Townsville & District Beekeepers Association welcome members from abroad to join the club! We have several foreign members from Europe, Asia and Africa. http://www.beesnorth.com.au.

In the UK, there are over 250 species of bees and while a few species of bumblebees are farmed, it is the European honeybee, *Apis mellifera*, which provides the honey to sweeten our lives. In Australia, there are approximately 1700 species of bees – albeit it is continent island. We are blessed with not only *Apis mellifera*, but with a cornucopia of other Apidae species, the significant ones are in the Meliponini family, the stingless bee. Yes, stingless bees! There is a sting, but it's too short. They make up for it by being able to bite with powerful mandibles, but at most this is annoying.

This group of social species collects large amounts of pollen and are extremely important as a source of honey for many people in the Equatorial zones aroundthe world. The species of Meliponini which are being farmed commercially in Northern Queensland are *Tetragonula hockingsi* and *Tetragonula carbonaria*, followed by *Austroplebeia australis*.

Being stingless, these species are great for schools where the kids can be introduced to keeping bees without the risk of injury.

APIS MELLIFERA AND TETRAGONULA HOCKINGSI COLLECTING POLLEN FROM A CACTUS FLOWER. THIS HELPS TO INDICATE THE SCALE OF THE TWO SPECIES.

The stingless bees

It is very difficult to see the difference between the two species and *T. hockingsi* is used as an example.



QUEEN IN THE HIVE. THERE ARE ALSO A NUMBER OF PRINCESSES WAITING TO TAKE OVER IF THE QUEEN FAILS!





The hive

Left: Worker

Right: DRONE – NOTE THE EXTERNAL GENITALIA

Like the European honeybee these stingless bees live in a cavity. In the wild these bees live in hollow old trees. Using the basic principles where the brood is separated from the honey and pollen reserves.





NATIVE STINGLESS BEEHIVE FARMED STINGLESS BEE OATH BOX

The brood area

The brood appearance is an easy way to distinguish between these two species of Tetragonula. The management of the brood is one major difference between Tetragonula and Apis. The egg is laid and provided with all the food reserves it will require. The cell is capped immediately after the queen lays.

T. HOCKINGSI BROOD MASS MORE LIKE A BALL.







Where are the pollen and honey reserves? Instead of making hexagonal honey cells – these bees make wax pots to store their honey and pollen, more like UK Bumblebees. Stingless bees use propolis, a mixture of tree resin and wax to build pots and cells. The honey has a distinctly different taste.

HONEY STORAGE POTS

POLLEN STORAGE POTS





Varroa volunteer mission to NSW from TDBAI Club members

Club Volunteers have been helping out in NSW to inspect NSW beehives in the attempt to contain and destroy the most recent incursion. Thanks for a big effort to help our NSW beekeepers – and Australia.

More Varroa volunteers are being requested Get in touch with DAF to register your interest.

Ukraine and Russia – National flowers - sunflower and chamomile – can they ever bloom in peace again?





From the Club Shop volunteers

Hi Bee Club members Update - our website is up again, you can place your orders via <u>beesnorth.com.au</u> Next shop opening is Saturday October 8.

Location: 3/38 Rendle St, Aitkenvale Time: 9am - 10:30am Collection at other time by arrangement and when volunteers are available.

July/August/September have been rough months, they opened with Covid, then off to NSW for several of the club members to help with the varroa incursion. On our return, the website and email systems went down and are still a work in progress. As a result, we are behind in filling back orders from the July shop, attending to new member applications and everything in between.

If you experience difficulty accessing the web site for orders, please use the following email address to contact the club for shop purchases and other queries - tsvbeeclub@gmail.com

Remember the Shop etiquette - politeness and patience are key components to success

To all visitors to our Club Shop – please be respectful, patient and polite to our Volunteer shopkeepers. Please arrive with a smile, a dose of patience, and remember your manners.

Email orders will be given priority and serviced - walk in orders may not be completed.

Golden Rules for the Club Shop:

Please follow this guide:

- 1. Order AND Pay by Thursday midnight **<u>before</u>** the opening day,
- 2. Arrive at the Shop <u>after</u> 9:00 am, pay for your order, **don't hang around inside the Shop to chat** – too many people inside.
- 3. Non-emailed or late orders may not get any attention if the Shop is too busy.
- 4. Please take your purchases and make room for the next shoppers, thanks

Native bee Newsletter - join the group and check out some great info and photos

The CROSS-POLLINATOR - Newsletter of the Australian Native Bee Association

Original articles, new information and news from the world of native bees. The Association has branches in Sydney, Brisbane, Wide Bay and Gladstone, but no Townsville branch?? Are there enough interested native beekeepers to get one "flying"?

Check out these sites: <u>https://australiannativebee.org.au/</u> <u>https://www.facebook.com/Australian.Native.Bee.Association/</u> <u>https://www.instagram.com/australiannativebeeassociation/</u>

Meeting Minutes for September 20222 General Meeting

Previous AGM Minutes on 17/10/2021 at HPSS



Meeting opened 10:45 am Chair: Paul Payne (PP) Notes: Lindsay Trott - MO thanked Naomi and family for support, Committee and volunteers for dedication Annual Financial Report: Treasurer Frana M declared financial accounts open and have been sent for auditing Annual income \$160K, expenditure \$148K, stock \$20K, assets \$60K Shop Purchases: Honey jars \$20K, hardware \$70K, \$11K profit Books available for inspection after audit Accept financial report: Moved Beryl Smart, 2nd Lindsay Trott

- PP declared all Club positions open and needing new nominations for existing and some new committee positions Membership, Native bees, Vice President, President, Secretary, Treasurer
- PP noted that MO is retiring and not seeking re-election
- 450+ Club members so we have large pool, but not many volunteers, Club is an incorporated body and needs a president and a Secretary.
- No written or emailed nominations for Office Holders
- One written nomination for Committee Member –Lisa Fenoglio
- Discussion and suggestions received.
- New Committee and Office Bearers for 21/22

Welcome to the Executive and Committee for 2021/22

Position	Name	Nominated	Seconded
President	Nick Smith	Frana McKinstry (FM)	Beryl Smart (BS)
Vice president	Mark Finn	FM	BS
Secretary	Lindsay Trott	BS	MO (Mick Olsen)
Treasurer	TBA	Jon McKinstry	BS
Assistant Treasurer	Frana McKinstry	MO	Lindsay Trott (LT)
Assistant Treasurer	Mandy Thomas	MO	FM
Newsletter	Lindsay Trott	FM	MO
Shop	ТВА	FM	LT
Native bees	Nick Smith	BS	MO
Librarian	Beryl Smart	LT	FM
Website	Mick Olsen/Nick Smith	FM	LT

Committee Members:

Lisa Fenoglio, Maria Finn, Dan Killoran, Dorris Newitt, Naomi Olsen, Sandylee Hutchinson, Alan Ziegenfusz, John Carr

Meeting closed: 11:30 am

A couple of HPSS Hives were inspected, but only supers were checked, it was too hot for bees and people in suits, and for much else. Coffee, tea, biscuits and a chat was enjoyed by the small group who attended.

Welcome to our New Members

Existing Club Members are encouraged to assist/mentor our Newbees. They have joined the club to learn about bees, so even if you only have limited experience, give them a hand if you can. Invite a Newbee to your hive opening and discuss what's inside the box, let newbies experience hive openings to become more confident, and you will learn more yourself by trying to explain what's going on in there.

Subscribe to the Bee Aware e-newsletter and stay up to date

The BeeAware newsletter is an e-newsletter for beekeepers and growers of pollinator-reliant crops, or anyone else simply interested in beekeeping or the pollination of crops. Each newsletter contains the latest in news, research and development, as well as upcoming events relating to honey bee biosecurity and the pollination of horticultural and agricultural crops. Townsville features in Issue 52 due to the latest AHB and Varroa incursion. https://beeaware.org.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/

Annual Membership Fees are due in July/August each year - currently \$30/p.a.

Membership fees can be made electronically to: Name:- Townsville and District Beekeepers Association BSB:- 633000 Account:- 141466078 Refer :- Please make sure you add your Surname so that your membership can be signed off.

Email contacts for the Office Holders 2020/21

You can use these email contacts for the Office Holders, and hopefully they will have figured out how to access them and will respond ASAP. president@beesnorth.com.au, treasurer@beesnorth.com.au, shop@beesnorth.com.au, And for all web and membership enquiries : info@beesnorth.com.au

TDBAI Office Holders for 2021/20222

President: Nick Smith Vice President: Mark Finn Secretary: Lindsay Trott Treasurer: TBA Treasurer's Assistant: Frana McKinstry Treasurer's Assistant: Mandy Thomas Membership: Frana McKinstry : info@beesnorth.com.au Membership: Frana McKinstry : info@beesnorth.com.au Newsletter: Lindsay Trott Assistant Editor: Dr John Carr Librarian: Beryl Smart Webmaster: Mick Olsen/Nick Smith Native bees: Nick Smith Committee: Alan Ziegenfusz, Lisa Fenoglio Paul Payne, Sandylee Hutchison, Maria Finn, Dan Killoran, Doris Newitt, Naomi Olsen, Dr John Carr

Swarm Contact List:

Please advise editor@beesnorth.com.au if you wish to be removed from this list. Contact me with your name, phone number and suburb if you want to be added to the list. **Kelso/Kirwan**: Steve and Carla Kersnovske - 0417 344 419 **Douglas/ Gulliver**: Sonya Verburgt - 04 0853 0991 **Alice River/ Bluewater**: Sharene Dougall – 0415426903 Ronelle Nord – 0417752622 Duane Saltmer - 0400 339 508 Amanda Woodcock – 0405784083 Black River through to Rollingstone: Alex Jenkins - 0459472166 **Aitkenvale**: Pat Dury - mob 0419252829 **Charters Towers:** Mervyn Yule - 0427 124 126

Swarm List People: Please contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 for any swarm or strange bee activity in the Townsville region. For all swarm collections, please collect 300 bees or roughly 10% of brood comb and submit to Biosecurity Queensland for pest and disease monitoring.

Newsletter Editor needs your input - why not tell me your story?

Club Member Profiles

From The Ed.

The Newsletter Editor receives some wonderful stories and photos from some of our Members. And it makes our Newsletter a personal and relevant method of communicating our bee adventures with to all our Members, many of whom cannot get to the meetings or events. Some of these stories are amusing – like The Blooper Series (The Ed seems to feature in a lot of these), Product Reviews, stories from the many events, markets and school visits, information from our more learned members, news about workshops and open days, and so on.

I would like to include this section in the monthly Newsletter and for this to be about a different Club member each month, but it can only happen if at least 1 out of the 400+ members puts pen to paper, takes a snapshot and sends in the info to me at the Newsletter desk.

So, how about giving it a go? You don't even have to think about what to say. You just have to write in and embellish a little, tell me funny stories, successes, failures, problems and what beekeeping means to you. Go for it!! We would love to hear what you have been up to. The TDBAI has over 400 members at last count.

Surely one or two are prepared to fill in a half page questionnaire and take a photo? If you cant write, and cant take a photo, then give me a call and I will come over for a cuppa and a chat and we will be able to extract a story with you for the rest of our Members enjoyment. Lets keep the Club Member Profile articles for the monthly Newsletter rolling.

Here's the questionnaire – fill it out and attach a couple of photos, including one of yourself and send to me mailto:: trottlindsay@gmail.com

CLUB MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name/HIN/Suburb/Native or/and European bees/Type of hives?/ Type of foundation?/Beetle protection?Year commenced beekeeping?/Who was your mentor?/

No of hives/area of hive locations?

/Who is involved in your household? Is anyone allergic/sensitive to stings?

What has been your biggest success? / failure?/ mistake?/ biggest lesson?

What would you do differently if you had to start beekeeping again after a disaster like fire/AFB/Varroa/cyclone

Do you sell/barter/give away honey? How much honey does your average hive produce? Do you make any other products from your hives? Do you volunteer for the Club at Open days, markets, school events, public displays? Would you like to participate? Any stories you would like to tell?

Attach photo please?

That's it!!!!! Just fill it out and send it to me, and you will be a rock star in the Monthly Newsletter.

Please provide more than just a one word answer!!

The Ed

DBA Bee Starter Kit - \$160

The Perfect Gift for a budding Beekeeper

Available in Townsville from the Club Shop:

Club Members Price Only! - \$160

Hive tool, brush, vented jacket/veil, gloves, and smoker Plus: The ABC of Beekeeping book

Contact: shop@beesnorth.com.au





ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022 NOMINATION FORM

l,	of
Being a member of the above na	med Association hereby nominate
	of
To be	
Association Inc during the year 2	022 / 2023
Nominated by:	
Cocondod by	(Signature)
Seconded by:	(Signature)
Dated:	
	Note: Form to be returned to TDBA Secretary before AGM
Cut along dotted line	ΓOWNSVILLE & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016
l,	of
Being a member of the Association	on, appoint
Of	
As my proxy to vote for me on m	y behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the above named Association to be held
on	
18 October 2022, and at any adjo	ournment thereof
Signed this	
	(Signature)
This form is to be used: - In favo	ur of the resolution ./ - Against the resolution