

February 2015

Volume 2015,
Issue 1



PO Box 1115, Aitkenvale, Q4814

Special points of interest:

-

Next meeting:

Sunday 2:00PM
15 February 2015.
At 3 Macor Court
Balgol Beach

REMEMBER—
your chair

Newsletter of the Townsville and District Beekeepers Association



Native Bees draw crowds !

Hosting two days of workshops on native bees was not only a coup and a boon for our club, it was also the coolest thing the TDBA has done for many a decade, if ever! It started as a good idea back in June, but thanks to Frana and few others, it transformed into reality on the 9th and 10th of November. Clearly, Townsville folk have been yearning for an opportunity to learn about these cool little cousins of the bee world for a very long time because with only a few postings on a handful of public forums the first workshop on a Sunday was booked to its 40-seat limit. Frana organised with our workshop lecturer and facilitator, Dr Tim Heard (ex CSIRO entomologist, now full-time “meliponist”, i.e. native bee keeper), to hold a second day on the Monday. It too was filled up soon after. We had print and radio media invites sent but they would not run the stories until the actual week of the workshop. By then, both were already full. Frana, Jon and Grant bore the brunt of phone calls and delivering knock-backs to the many people who responded to the media stories. Some were very upset at having missed out too! Even a long stick was not enough to deter some gate crashers on the day! By the time the workshop days came around Frana already had a long list of

people on standby for the next workshop, a date for which had not even been set! Such was the draw of native bees and the opportunity to learn a little bit more about this fascinating and cool little social insect.



Walking into the room it was a case of: “Who are all these people, where do they all come from”? Most were complete strangers. All I thought about was how have we manage to miss these potential club members for all this time? Tim had his audience in the palm of his hand within the first minute with his question: “What makes bees different from all other insects?” The answers popped up here there and everywhere: no, it was not that they were social, made honey, or propolis, nor collected pollen, not because they had a queen etc., etc.! It is, in fact, because they feed their young pollen! No other insect

Native Bees draw crowds ! *continued*

does this! For the first 75 minutes of the day we journeyed through the evolutionary ancestry of bees (about the same time as flowering plants emerged), the anatomical features of bees, their diversity, biology and behavioural ecology. Did you know that quite a few native Australian bee species, including blue-banded bees and carpenter bees, can “buzz-pollinate” flowers? In fact, many flowers (including tomatoes) rely on “buzz-pollination” because they have anthers that are tubular and require the “buzz” to release the pollen? Did you also know that every single cup of coffee you drink is thanks to native bee pollinators? Honey bees do not get a look-in with coffee bean shrubs! Even for seasoned honey bee enthusiasts, there was much to learn about these little cousins to the ‘big’ bees! Speaking of cousins, did you know that honey bees and Australian native bees belong to the same family (Apidae) and only separated about 80 million years ago? By coffee (muchas gracias dear natives!) time, our heads were spinning! This was a time to meet and talk to some of those strange faces and see what their story was. Many, it turns out, had never kept bees before, big or small,



*The brood of a *Tetragonula carbonaria* colony is quite beautiful. It consists of pearl-like egg cases in a multi-layer arrangement of whirls with the newest uncapped cells on the outer margin of the whirl.*



but were captivated by native bees and just “wanted” a hive!

First time or many a time, all heads craned in for the first open hive.

After morning tea... err coffee..., it was time for the first of two practical sessions where we learnt the art of hive-splitting (two different species). We also got a long rundown on hive design before the knife finally got sunk into the two halves of the native bee box and we could see its insides laid bare. 40+ people stretched their necks to unbelievable lengths to get a good look!

More lectures followed after lunch. These centred on the different types of native bees, their modes of colony duplication (did you know that native bees do not swarm?) and colony care. A

A second practical session was on hiving colonies from a log and/or how to do hive transfers. The practical sessions were without doubt the ‘star’ of the show. In a feed-back questionnaire which attendees filled in, almost all commented how good these were. Tim, our presenter, also featured heavily in the overwhelmingly positive responses with comments like:

“Fantastic presenter. Very, very easy to understand & he clearly has a wealth of knowledge.”

“Fantastic presenter (Tim). Highly recommended”

“Quite captivating”

Probably the most telling of questions as to whether people enjoyed their day was this one: “Would you recommend this workshop to a friend?” For 100% of respondents it was an emphatic “Yes”! To say that Tim ‘shone’ for us is an understatement. Since the workshop, interest in the next workshop continues to grow with 79 names already on the stand-by list. For those interested in coming along for the next one, better put these dates in your diary: Fri 22nd and Sat 23rd May 2015! If you are interested in selling or obtaining a hive, Frana has started compiling a list of interested buyers and potential sellers (down the track). Please contact Frana if you would like to get on the list.

A HUGE thank you to Frana for taking on the organisation of this workshop. Given the 100’s of enquiries and multiple phone and email contacts for each and every one, this was a very big effort and we are deeply indebted to her for this. Also to Tim for running this fantastic workshop. Thanks Frana and Tim!

Ray Berkelmans

Minutes of the Meeting....

TDBA October meeting 16-11-2014.

Held at Kevin and Wendy's place in Pimlico.

Opened at 2.10pm. Ron welcomed new members and guests.

Present: As per signed book over 30 members and around 9 guests.

Apologies: As per signed book and the emails I have received.

Minutes of Previous meeting:

Matters arising: taken as read. Mov. Ray B.

Sec. Frana Mc.

Native bee workshop a great success, many members joined. Tim's Expenses \$1500. The next will cost \$2500 if we have it.

Ron spoke on the workshop as did others. Ray B did a survey at the weekend and it was very positive.

Frana ordered foundation which has sold well, the beetle traps are going very well as well. Frana suggested using vegemite others found it didn't work.

Ray B spoke of the AFB in Wulguru, questions were asked of that. There was a discussion on the possibility of getting a disposable fire unit here to destroy the hives infected with the disease. A letter to be sent to members of Parliament.

Corres. in: Emails from the website re interested people. Robert Dewar re voting about the Asia bee.

Treasury resignation from Life member Doug McBride.

OUT: lots of email follow ups with new members and other interested people.

Treasurer's report: Following from the resignation of Doug McBride as Treasurer, Frana has taken over the role at least until the next AGM. There will be some changes in the way funds are managed and reported, mainly being electronic funds transfer for club purchases, and phasing out of hard copy receipts. All transactions will be recorded and reported at the AGM, however a paper copy receipt will only be issued if requested.

The Annual Treasurers Report 2013-2014 (not tabled at the August AGM) will be presented at the February meeting.

In brief, income of \$6,183.05 and expenditure of \$4,650.74 meant a net profit of \$1,532.31. This was mainly as a result of increased membership and profit from the Movie Night in May.

General Business:

Ron called for nominations for Treasurer

Dave Turnbull nominated Frana McKinstry for the position of treasurer. Sec. Dan D. Frana accepted the nomination.

No other nominations were made. The vote was taken and Fran was elected to the position.

Frana spoke on the material for sale from the club. Traps, suits, beginners kit and other stuff. A frame showing day old eggs was also on display.

The meeting took a vote on the options offered by the QBA. Option one Nil; Option 2 nil; Option 3 29.. Option 3 carried.

Discussion again on the Turkish "honey" members need to be aware and let me know if they find any honey from Turkey on our shelves and I will report to the QBA.

Graham spoke on the ability for honey to absorb water. He spoke about the research being done on queens being mated with feral drones to help the bees out with lineage. He discussed how bees easily change loyalty to which ever queen is in the hive if done correctly.

Swarms going well. Mick Taylor spoke of taking the swarms for free as is on the web site. Needs to be removed he feels as people look to our club to remove bees for free from their surroundings. Some of our beekeepers need to and want to charge and people are willing to pay at times. We could even be asked to pay for them to be removed.

Frana and Jon have hives for sale for the new people.

Questions were asked about how long to leave an introduced queen before having a look to see if she is working for you. Various answers were offered.

Alli gave the meeting an update of her split hive one other meeting. She is happy with it.

Frana spoke on her re-queening a hive to have it be more quiet.

Ron asked about having a workshop about how to get a bees nest from a wall or ceiling in the new year. Dan D. will head it up if enough interest.

Minutes of the Meeting.....continued..

NEXT MEETING

December: a function on the 7th December 12:30
West End Hotel.

January: recess.

February: Balgal Beach at Geoff Fisher's place.

March: Alli Navarro's place Mt. Low.

April:

May:

June: Sonya's place Gulliver.

Meeting closed 3:50. food and drink was enjoyed.

Kevin opened a hive Graham showing him a new way of putting in a trap into the hive and sorting the beetle when opening a hive.

New Bees...

I took these photos of my hive at 6pm tonight. They must be feeling the heat the poor buggers.

Cooler outside than in. hanging right down the front.

I put the supper on about 5 weeks ago, opened it 2 weeks ago to check the beetle traps.

The beetle traps were empty which was good. I can get right up to the hive and it doesn't

Worry them at all in the day time.

The whipper snipper they don't like but, pinged me a few times around the face and shoulders.

So I closed the door that night, finished with the whipper snipper and the mower the next morning

And then opened the door again. Looks like the way to go.

They were still working the bottom box filling the outside frames with honey 2 weeks ago and they were close to fill.

They removed all the wax on the foundations in the supper and must have moved it to the

Bottom box. Will have a look this weekend as I can hear bees in the lid above the super so they

May have started up top.

Some of them had a orange/red pollen on their legs going into the hive which matched the stamens

On a hibiscus I have in flower. The trees over the road have been in flower and they are full of bees

In the morning when I walk under them to get to the work ute.

Alan Ziegenfusz..



Dave swarms himself...

It is with huge regret that we mourn the passing of a loyal and ever-present member, Dave Muspratt. Dave passed away 5 December 2014, aged 65.



Fearless Dave rarely wore protective gear when working his bees

David was the 'life-of-the-party' kind of guy and was into just about any kind of fun that was going. When he finished his apprenticeship as a motor mechanic he and his mates travelled around NZ for a year in a van adorned with a banner which read: "Ayr NQ": our kiwi brethren never quite got that.... (what's this misspelt "air"?). Dave was a hugely talented football player as a youngster and played for the Colts and in the Foley Shield for the Burdekin together with many big names of the time. A bad car accident in 1978 severely dented his carefree life until then. He broke just about every bone in his body, including his spine. He spent 4 months in a coma and was told he would never walk again. When he came out of the coma he had to learn to eat, talk and walk from scratch. Those who heard his eulogy know the tales of guts and determination that led him to overcome the incredible odds against him.



Dave Muspratt (second from left) at the extra-ordinary meeting on 28 Sep 2014, still full of beans and cheek!

Sometime during his recovery he took up beekeeping and became highly competent, successfully making a small business of it. In the last 11 years he did so with his loving wife Virginia by his side. His bees were very dear to him and he scarcely missed a club meeting even when things got tough.

In late September we had an extra-ordinary club meeting at his place in Brandon while he was still feeling relatively good! We enjoyed some fantastic hospitality and great company. The thing that struck me was that Dave, though chair-bound, he was in great spirits and wonderfully buoyant, something which pretty-much defined his life! That says a lot about Dave: he suffered more than his share of adversity but somehow learnt to take hardship in his stride! Dave is survived by Virginia and three children from previous marriages.

When a hive swarms, it is ultimately for the greater good of the colony and the species. Dave, you've left us a better place for your presence. I think you might have swarmed for our greater good too?

Thank you for all you've done for us!

Ray

Ageing Beekeepers'....

The President of the New South Wales Apiarists Association says he's hopeful the Federal Minister for Agriculture will find the necessary funding to help train the next generation of beekeepers.



PHOTO: [New South Wales Apiarists Association is concerned about the ageing population within the industry, and is looking for young people to take up beekeeping as a trade.](#) (Flickr: Randy OHC)

Casey Cooper recently met with Barnaby Joyce to voice concerns about the future of the industry. He said the majority of beekeepers are nearing retirement and there are very few young people going into the trade. Mr Cooper said he raised the prospect of developing training and incentives to help attract more young people to the beekeeping business.

"Sadly like all agricultural industries, we're all getting a bit older," he said. "Blokes are retiring and there's not a lot of young people coming into the industry, so the industry is getting smaller and smaller, and like any agricultural or like any industry its young people are the future of it." "If we could encourage young people to take an interest and carry on the industry, it'd be only for the better." Mr Cooper said beekeeping is not a lucrative trade. "It's constant work, and the cash return for your investment is not that large," he said. "It's hard to make good money out of it." "Like any agricultural industry, the ups and downs, to withstand them, you've got to have a bit of a passion and a want to be involved in bees."

By Johannah McOwan from ABC News

It's a Hot One'....

It's a long and cruel summer this year. With El Nino-like weather patterns now set in, rainfall and cloudiness is well below average for this time of the year. While temperatures measured by the Bureau of Meteorology at the airport are consistently in the mid-thirties (and humidity high), at my place in Wulguru temperatures are at 2- 3 degrees warmer and hovering in the high-thirties. Needless to say this is not a happy time for bees. Over Christmas there were many calls from members of the public about bee swarms. I came home from 6 weeks away and found that two out of my three native bee hives had died out. Native bees do not have the same coping mechanisms as honey bees, such as fanning to keep the hive cool and carrying water to the hive to regurgitate and evaporate.



Fig 1. One of my native bee hives, completely slimed out by maggots. A weakened hive is easy prey for predators.

Even so, for honey bees this is a tough time as well. As I write this (19 Jan), my real-time, wireless temperature monitoring system is reading 38.6 deg C on our back deck (shade) and 37.2 deg C in my one and only remaining hive (having down-sized before Christmas). Thankfully,

It's a Hot One'....continued

I have an extraction fan in the hive which is busy whirring away, else that temperature is likely to be well into the forties, based on past experience!

As an experiment, today I wet the hive with the garden hose to see what effect that would have on temperatures inside the hive. Within 5 minutes, temperatures had dropped by one degree and within 20 minutes by 3 degrees (Fig 2). Hosing the hive down had to be done every 10-minutes or so as the water evaporated fairly quickly and temperatures rose soon after. Covering the hive with a wet doona cover allowed me to reduce the moisture top up to every half hour or so. This kept temperatures around 34-35 deg C - still high-ish, but a lot cooler than otherwise! (Fig 2). I only managed to keep up the manual sprinkling for a few hours, but hopefully long enough to illustrate the point.

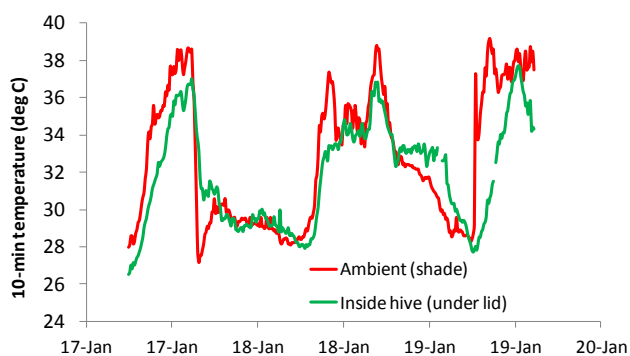


Fig 2. With shade and an extraction fan, my hive kept ~1.5 deg below ambient temperatures and avoided daily peaks in the high thirties (17th and 18th Jan). However, when the hive was kept wet, temperatures dropped by another 3 deg.

If I was staying in the Townsville area, I would seriously look at installing an intermittent spray system on the hive. A 5-sec light spray every 10-min would be all that would be required. In fact, I might still see what I can do to rig up a temporary system...

Wishing you and your bees cool tidings!

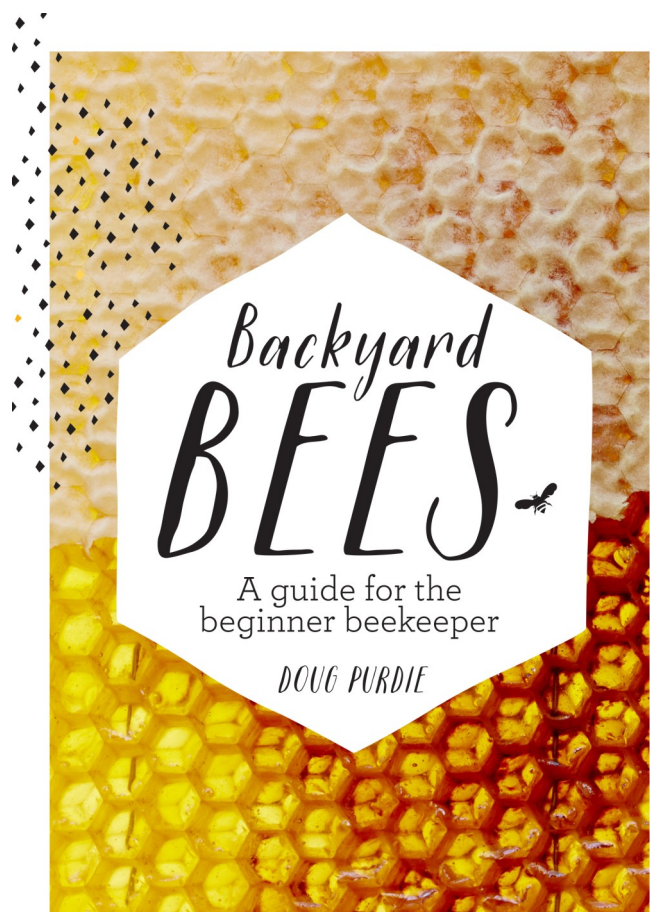
Ray

CLUB library ...

Don't FORGET ! Our Club has a well stocked library.

Please see Jon & Frana at the meetings to borrow books.

This is one of the latest additions to the club library .

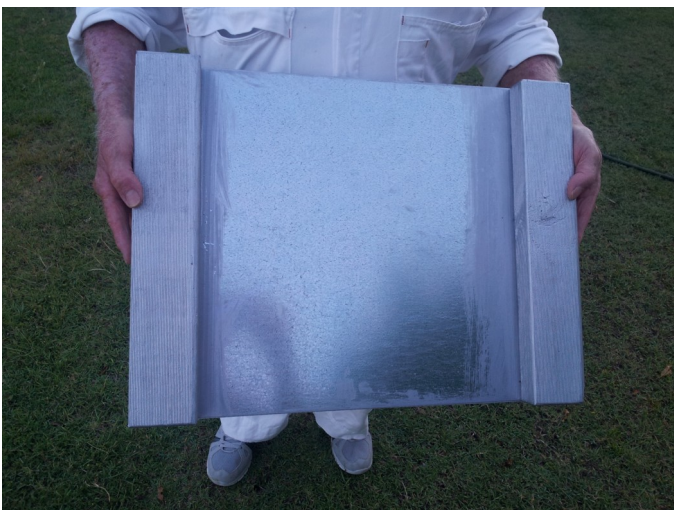
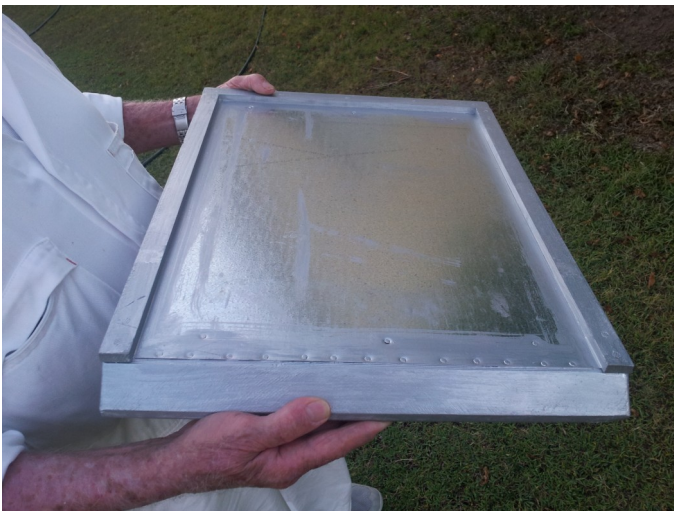


Classifieds

For Sale

Bottom Boards - 10 Frames
wood & metal pressure primed before assembly and ready for use
made to Australian Standards
9mm risers & cleats
70x35 mm to fit commonly used stands

\$20 each
Graham Smith
232 Corcoran Street
Currajong 4812
t - 47796591



For Sale

Club shop News

We're increasing the range of items available to club members. Dan Donovan has made plastic foundation and full depths frames available, we also stock wax foundation and wire excluders (limited number) and are expecting new stock of the vented bee jackets in the near future.

Club Polo Shirts

Don't forget we still have these shirts, and I would like to get them moving. They are only \$22 each, please consider purchasing one of the remaining sizes/colours

White – 3XL; XL; L; M and S are available

Beige – 3XL, M and S are available

Womens style, we have 1 x white and 1 x beige, both Size 14 available.

Honey gate \$10

Smokers for sale - \$35

Gloves \$20

Honey gate \$10

Un-capping knife \$15

Hive Tools for sale - \$5

Frames \$1.35ea

Wax foundation \$1.35 ea

**Ring Frana Ph 0401 014 948 OR
franajon@gmail.com**

Wanted to Buy

Bees wanted

- Marg Crane
- Waldon Edwards

Bees for Sale

- Graeme Armstong
- Jon & Frana McKinstry

Anyone wanting to sell OR buy any equipment, bees, wooden ware or the like please forward a email with preferably a photo, some details and a price to wayne@bcqld.com.au

Club Shop Price List...

| Item | Price | Comment |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| Veil with drawstring | 20.00 | |
| Jacket / Round hat | 50.00 | |
| Ventilated jacket | 70.00 | |
| Full Suit | 75.00 | |
| Gloves | 20.00 | |
| | | |
| Hive tool (S/S) | 12.00 | |
| Hive tool (Yellow) | 5.00 | |
| Smoker | 35.00 | |
| | | |
| Queen Excluder - Wire | 20.00 | Limited supply |
| Queen Excluder - Plastic | 5.00 | Ideal for use as inner lids |
| | | |
| Frames - Full depth | 1.35 | |
| Foundation - Plastic | 1.90 | |
| Foundation - Wax | 1.25 | |
| | | |
| Bee Brush - Natural bristle | 8.00 | |
| Bee Brush - Synthetic bristle | 7.00 | |
| | | |
| Queen Catcher | 3.00 | |
| Frame Gripper | 8.00 | |
| | | |
| Gate valve | 10.00 | |
| Capping knife, serrated | 15.00 | |
| Comb scratcher | 6.00 | |
| Honey jars 500gm | 0.75 | |
| | | |
| TRAPS | | |
| Apithor trap | 6.00 | |
| Silver Bullet trap | 7.00 | or 3 for \$20 |
| TK Beetle mat | 6.00 | |
| "Die Ya Bastard" trap | TBA | |
| Diatomaceous earth | 2.00 | |
| | | |
| Booklet - Managing AFB | 6.00 | |
| | | |
| Club Polo Shirts | 22.00 | |

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LOTS-A-STINGS

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frames, plastic foundation
and much more.
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started with bees.
Dan Donovan
Ph 0428 218 816



Apithor Traps \$6
TK Mats for SHB \$6
Silver Bullet SHB traps \$7
See our Treasurer—Frana...



*All locally available in Townsville:
Club Members Only!*

Bee Jackets \$50 Hive tools \$5
Bee Brush \$7 Gloves \$20
Smokers \$35
All five items sold as a Beginners Kit \$90

Uncapping knives sold separately - \$15
Gate Valve \$10

Frana Ph 0401 014 948

