October 2014

Volume 2014, Issue 10

Newsletter of the Townsville and District Beekeepers Association

PO Box 1115, Aitkenvale, Q4814

Special points of interest:

- Magnetic Sucess
- Meeting minutes
- Is it Honey
- History of mead
- Book Review
- Classifieds

Next meeting:

Sunday 2:00PM
19 October 2014.
At 23 Stagpole St West End

REMEMBER— your chair

A Magnetic Success!

The more we journey with the club, the more we appreciate the benefits of rotating club meeting venues. September's meeting was at West Point on Magnetic Island. The meeting was hosted by Dave Ede and Tito Parigi. West Point is a nature-lovers delight and a gorgeous spot for a bee club meeting. Due to its remoteness, it was a meeting with challenging travel logistics and, if you were at the mercy of the commercial ferries, also reasonably expensive to get there. However, despite these challenges, at least 15 people managed to make it to this meeting.

Dave and Tito each have a single hive, single supered and thanks to Frana and Jon's enthusiasm, both were opened and inspected. It was clear pretty early on in the inspection that these poor Magnetic Island bees were doing it tough. It was also clear that remote bee practitioners do not have the skills or opportunities we "town's folk" take for granted to spot trouble early and do something about it. Food was so scarce for both hives that honey resources in the supers were completely gone and the colonies had shrunk to a point that they no longer needed a super. For more experienced members, regular openings of the hive would've alerted them to the dearth in floral resources and they might have resorted to feeding the bees supplemental sugar. Hopefully this occasion was instructive for all who attended and will allow early recognition of 'hard times' for the bees. Both hives were de-supered. The good news is that the brood boxes in both hives were in pretty good shape, indicating that things might be on the up-swing. Another interesting observation for us towns-folk was that the Small Hive Beetle (SHB) was almost non-existent in these hives! With so much other adversity, this is no doubt a small mercy!

Thanks Dave and Tito for a very relaxing and instructive meeting! It was cake paradise too - thanks for the catering Dave!

Minutes of the Meeting….

TDBA September meeting 21-09-2014.

Was at Tito's and Dave's place at West Point on Maggie Island. We had a look at their hives and advised that they both reduce the hive to one box until the colony becomes stronger. We did this while Mick Taylor enjoyed his boat trip over and was rewarded with a couple of nice fish said he will be going back!

TDBA Inc. September Meeting

Grant opened the meeting, 2.45pm

Present as per book. over 15 members

Apologies: Lindsay and Heidi, Lennie Mc., Leonie D., Tito, Dave & Virginnia Muspratt. . Sonya Mc. Dan D. Elle and Mike.

Minutes of Previous meeting: read by Grant, . Move Jon Mc.. sec Frana

Matters arising: Garden Expo, Frana spoke about the success of it. Her and Lindsay had many good questions asked, which was pleasing. Quite a few questions were asked by members at the meeting as well. It is Maggie Island Bay Day time for a few weeks .

Ray commented on the Library display and when it will be finished. He will organise when the time comes.

The native bee workshops have been very well received. Over 35 people are paid up. The dates are Sunday the 9th and Monday the 10th November. Tim has booked his flights. Please note that he is not charging to hear him speak so we are hosting him fully. The workshops are to be held at the Loam Island Community Centre.

Some discussion about the swarm list. It has been decided that it is to remain in its current format. Grant to get it to the council.

Dave spoke about the splitting of the hives.

The foundation wax the club bought for members has been very well received with over half of it having been sold already.

Grant brought up that members need to consider seriously about raising the prices of their honey.

Strong discussion followed with no firm decision but members need to consider it as Its a individual decision (of course).

Mick Taylor has been collecting swarms through contacts with pest controllers. He is keeping in close contact with them which is a very good thing for our club.

Corresspondance In: Emails from the website re interested people

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

Treasurer's report: Held over but we are healthy!

General Business:

Lyn asked about the medicinal properties of honey and received plenty of answers.

Victoria "honey" found in Qld after being removed from the shelves in Melbourne for not being honey. Please look at where the honey is from when you are in the shops. Australia has been importing honey from Turkey since 2006. We don't know how much of this has been 'not' honey. At least 3 brands are in the country from Turkey and one company from Germany has been doing the same thing. It is not honey, and the Aust Honey Council want to know about it. (it will probably have a different name by now!)

Frana spoke about the crystallization of her honey and gave a reason as to why it has done. It is all about fructose and glucose.

Please check your membership is correct and present. including your Qld beekeepers registration number. Please do it if you have not.

One of our members has AFB, in the Heatley area. Please check your brood boxes carefully when you have time.

A website you may wish to look at. swarm.patrol.com. you may learn some techniques you may be able to put into practice.

A discussion was held about the stolen brood boxes. Please keep your ear to the ground and tell someone if you see or suspect people are keeping bees and are not registered.

Minutes of the Meeting— continued...

Honey flows seem to be going well.

Frana will do another lot of ordering. A big thank you to Frana and Jon for doing this for members.

Ventilated jackets are available and seem to be of good quality.

The "Christmas Do" will be on Sunday the 6th of December. Grant to ring up Riverside Tavern and maybe the West End Hotel.

The members decided to host an extra TDBA meeting at the home of Dave Muspratt who is not all that well. The following Sunday at 2pm in Brandon.

The TDBA Exec will have to meet in the very near future about an insurance investment. It needs to be investigated and actioned quickly.

It is the swarming season now, Next meeting the swarm list will have to be updated. and sent to various places, i.e. the council, (they said the last update was in 2011. Grant would dispute this) DPI onto the website etc. Only registered beekeepers should be on the swarm list. Discussion was held with regard to a sharing of knowledge about how to collect swarms from the various places they appear.

A thank you to Dave for collecting members from the ferry and dropping them back.

NEXT MEETINGS :

October: Robert T place in West End.

November: Kevin and Wendy's in Pimlico.

December: a function on the 6th December.

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

TDBA Inc. September Extra meeting.

TDBA Extra meeting 28-09-2014.

Dennis Anger stood in for Ron R. and opened the meeting, 2.45pm

Present: Frana and Jon; Dan and Gillian D. Ray B. Dave T. Doug Mc. Grant W. Virginia, Dennis A. Elle M. Dave M.

Apologies: Lindsay and Heidi, Paul and Jacinta P. Robyn A, Ron and Rose R. Graham A. Mike J. Mick T. Sonya Mc.

Dennis invited members to observe 1 minutes silence for a past long time member Ron McCleod.

Minutes of Previous meeting: held over.

Corres.: IN: Emails from the website re interested people

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

Treasurer's report: Held over but We are healthy!

Matters arising:

More Apithor traps have been ordered.

Native bee workshop only 4 weeks away. Frana asked for a better method to work out how she would know who has paid and who has not. Grant to get a copy of the statements from Doug and get them to her. Not many places left.

The catalyst program on the ABC was of interest to members and they enjoyed gaining knowledge about varroa. It centred on scientists bringing queens from over seas that had shown some resistance to varroa.

Doug spoke on another programme (Richard Hammond Engineering) about how the temp of the lava dictates the type of work the bee will do once it hatched. It was filmed under infrared light. Doug gave us a run down on the type of bee and its temp.

ABC radio on Country Hour had an item on Apis Cerena and how it was interbreeding with European queens and rendering them infertile. This is a huge problem for the queen breeders. When Rob Stevens returns he will be asked. Frana could download the script for the club.

TDBA Inc. September Extra meeting —Continued.....

Honey flows going well.

Dave M asked about the marking of queens. Elle and Frana use Posca Pens to dot their queens, does a good job.

Swarm collections are going well enough.

Frana presented the ventilated suit and it will be a hit with us up here as if will allow you to be cooler when working the hives.

SHB survey needs to be done by those who have not done it.

Virginia spoke on the learning field day at Graham Armstrong's place with Trevor Weatherhead, It was very successful.

Bees stolen from an Ingham beekeeper in recent times.

Jon McK. was approached by Don Hamilton to see if he could sell some gear to our club members. It will be put in the newsletter for members to decide.

Dennis presented a birthday card to Dave Muspratt.

Dave thanked the members for coming to him for the meeting.

NEXT MEETINGS :

October: Robert T place in West End.

November: Kevin and Wendy's in Pimlico.

December: a function on the 6th December.

Meeting closed 3:40.

Check if its HONEY.....

We ask all members to keep an eye out in the shops, particularly the fruit shops, and other different places where honey could be sold. (it is against the law to sell a product labelled as something that it is not)

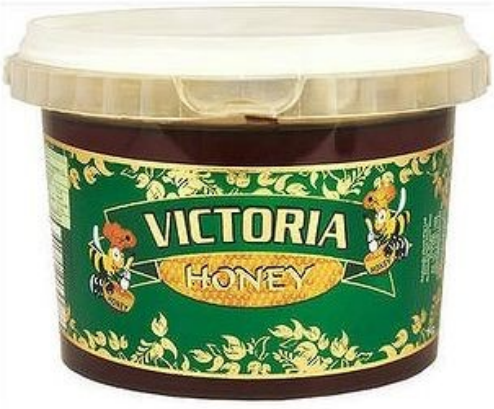
Most Beekeepers would be aware of the ongoing problem with "honey" coming into Australia from Turkey that is not honey. (Victoria Honey).

... 3 further cases of imported "honey" not being honey./ ... more imports are arriving. ... brand names are **HiHoney**, **Sunshine Honey, Hecham Honey and Golden Honey.** (so far 4 from Turkey, 1 from Italy, and one from Serbia.)

Victoria Honey was ordered from the shelves in Victoria but have been found on the shelves in Brisbane. Only 5% of honey that is imported is checked that it is honey. not good.

The AHBIC is keeping vigilant through asking beekeepers to keep them informed if any honey from Turkey is found on any shelf.

From the Editorial ABK September 2014.



A Brief History of Mead..

by Lady Bridget and Lord Riekin @ 2001

It has been established that the ancient Egyptians were the first to create beer and that they had mead for a long time prior to that. Mead is, simply put, fermented honey and water, and can be created naturally without the help of man. It stands to reason that man would develop the ability to recreate what nature provided almost accidentally, and certainly could put the origins of mead into the Neolithic period.

Mead has long been associated with Kings and Gods, but in the middle ages there was the phenome- non of the "small mead". At the same time as the harvest of the early fruits, the beehives were also raided. The honey in the comb was squeezed out and stored for use by the nobility as a sweetener.

The wax was desired for candles, medicinal salves, jewelry making, and a wide host of other uses. It was processed by throwing it into large vats of boiling water where the wax melted, and the residues of honey dissolved into the water. This then cooled and slabs of wax were lifted from the surface, for re-melting and other processing.

The weak sugar solution in the pots was allowed to ferment with the naturally occuring yeast in the air and was ready for drinking when the harvest of the grain began. It was long, hard work, and was made far more cheerful by the bubbling, carbonated pots of thin, honey "beer" that was liberally passed out to the workers. They would simply scoop their mug right into it and get a dose of bee vitamins and protein right along with their alcohol.

A portion of the honey that had been pressed from the comb would of course end up in the much stronger, sweeter "high mead" destined for the Lord's table, and prepared by his castle brewer. After the introduction of wine from the Mediterranean countries, mead was looked upon as more of a countryman's drink, and lost it's popularity among the nobles. But it did not lose it's popularity among the common folk because, like beer, it could be made from materials at hand and unlike wine, it didn't require special tem- peratures for storage or ageing.

However, beer was much less expensive to produce and replaced mead as the daily drink of all classes. Mead was still produced for special events, like marriages. It's lure

Taken from A Honey of a Cookbook , is the following ***recipe for Dry Mead***:

Mead making is one of the oldest crafts known to mankind. Mead is a pleasant alcoholic drink made by fermenting honey and water with yeast. If you've ever had the urge to make mead try this recipe. It is a proven success story.

11/2 kg Honey

4 1/2 L water

25ml yeast nutrient

1pkt yeast-mead (hock or moselle yeast could be used

Dissolve honey and yeast nutrient in 500ml warm water, stirring well. Boil 4 litres of water and allow to cool to 24 degrees C

Fit a fermentation lock to the gallon jar or carboy and after approx 24 hrs add a package of yeast of your choice. Allow mead to ferment to dryness (about 5 days) then rack it into another another jar or carboy. Top with water, fir fermentation lock and store in a cool place.

A second racking should be made after four months and thereafter a t six month intervals. Some meads are fit to drink after a few months but others may require several years to mature.

If a sweeter mead is desired add 250gms of honey at the time of the first racking. Continue storage and racking as above.

And for an excellent tutorial on the basic steps to making mead visit this website. Great content

http://www.stormthecastle.com/mead/make-mead-1-brewing-the-must.htm

BOOK REVEIW.....

Just Google It

There is something neat about Google – you type in a subject and Google sorts out what you might like to find out about. The Club Library has a dictionary like book that is a good, first base reference for almost any subject of beekeeping you may wish to research.

The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture by The A.I. Root Bee Library is set out like a dictionary with an extensive Index and a very nice Glossary to allow you to get to the subject you want to research.

The first edition of the book was printed in 1877 however, this edition was printed in 1983. Now, being a little older, I thought that the items in the book may be well out of date but on the very first page is a history of the Africanized Bees. I have Googled Africanized Bees and the current information is not any more elucidating than this fine reference book.

We have been told that the life span of a worker is only about 6 weeks but this book gives a better understanding of the factors that impact on the longevity of the worker bee. Why would this be important? When we examine our brood chamber, the strength of the brood is an indicator of the strength of the hive in the next few months. If the life of the bees is as variable as the book suggests, then we must be mindful of this when we are observing the next few generations. This has made examining the brood chamber a lot more interesting.

The book covers from the anatomy of the bee to Zinc in honey. While some of the subjects, such as Honey Forage Plants, are not directly relevant to Townsville and District, the basis of the articles can be adapted to our area. More importantly, the book gives a good basis for finding the subjects to Google.

This book is highly recommended to new beekeepers as a first source of gaining a basic understanding of beekeeping terminology and culture. The books (2 copies) are available for borrowing. Take advantage this meeting.

Jon McKinstry

Club Librarian

A Morning with Grant Whiteford...

Last month, Grant was about to split some of his hives and offered an open house to show how it is done.

So on Saturday 30th, about 8 or 9 members came to his house to watch help out and learn.

A big thank you to Grant for the invite as it gave us

- the opportunity to ask many questions
- to handle the frames and see how the hives were split
- to have a very close look at the frames, the cells, larvae, pollen, etc.
- an awareness of some of the problems we may encounter

I found it reassuring, as I am certain the other new beekeepers did, that we are heading in the right direction with our own hives, but we still have much to learn.

We all have read much on beekeeping and watched numerous You Tube videos, all immensely helpful, but it is only through sessions such as we had, and speaking with the more experienced beekeepers, that we gain in confidence in managing our new hives.

Trevor and Karen Martin, Bushland Beach

Classifieds

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

Wanted to Buy

Bees wanted

- *Ronda & Gary Teitz*
- *Greg Broomhall*
- *Tito Parigi*
- *Marg Crane*
- *Allan Z.*

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

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SHB oil traps $5

See our Treasurer—Doug....

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All locally available in Townsville: Club Members Only!

Bee Jackets $50	Hive tools $5
Gate valves $10	Gloves $20
Smokers $35	

All five items sold as a Beginners Kit $90

Uncapping knives sold separately - $15

Frana Ph 0401 014 948