



Beekeepers Association of the ACT

Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the Australian Capital Territory
Incorporated

Meetings of our Association are conducted on the third Thursday of every month
(except December) at the
Yarralumla Primary School Hall, 24 Loftus Street, YARRALUMLA, ACT 2600

Contact: President – Cormac Farrell (0422) 441 358

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<https://www.facebook.com/BeekeepersAssociationoftheACT>

February 2017

Monthly meeting: 16 February 2017, Yarralumla Primary School at 7:30pm

AGENDA

1930 Introduction & Welcome: President (Cormac Farrell)
1935 Beginners Corner
1955 Assembling and preparing your Flow Hive (Cormac Farrell)
2030 Networking (light supper)
2100 Meeting close

Steve O'Hearn Secretary (0408) 657 871

President's Report

Biosecurity update- good news from QLD

SIG-native bees

Hive management updates

Annual Field Day 4 March

Speakers & vendors

Training update

Movie review

MOVING A HIVE

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President's Report

Dear Members,

I hope that everyone had a great Christmas and New Year and that your hives are finally starting to put down some stores in the lead up to autumn.

The upcoming month is going to be a busy one, with the Royal Canberra Show on **24-26 February** and then our Annual Field Day Saturday **4 March**.

The Royal Canberra Show has been a fixture on the calendar for years, and the honey and bee products competition is essential if you wish to claim bragging rights as a beekeeper. Entries have now closed, so the die is cast, but definitely come along to see the ACT Beekeepers stall. Best of luck to everyone who has entered this year! The **David Banks Champion Ribbon** for the best overall exhibit is a fitting tribute to one of our nation's greatest scientists, who was instrumental in setting up sentinel biosecurity programs that protect our primary industries to this day.

As I write this we are in the home stretch for organising our major event, the **Annual Field Day**, and it is promising to be a great one! Our hive management team have done a fantastic job preparing the hives during a very tough season. The hives are in good condition and ready to showcase beekeeping in the Canberra region.

Our Jerrabomberra Wetlands apiary now includes four hive pads with examples of Top Bar, Warre Hives as well as several different configurations of the standard Langstroth hive. We have been getting great use out of it with mini-field days, school groups and sentinel hive inspections.

In this month's newsletter we also have details of the speakers and vendors who will be joining us on the day. Our events coordinator has created some pretty amazing posters that are being shared widely on social media and through ACT Government websites. The line-up of presenters includes national and international experience, and has been designed to encompass as wide a range of beekeeping as possible.

In addition to the expert presenters we will be joined by several representatives of the ACT Legislative Assembly, as well as the ACT Chief Veterinarian. We are also expecting representatives from Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, in the lead up to their consideration on allowing urban beekeeping within Queanbeyan. We have been in contact with them for some time now on behalf of members, and we are hopeful that the right to keep bees in backyards will be restored soon.

The membership of the Association continues to grow, and now exceeds 470 members. While this is fantastic, it also carries with it an administrative challenge. When we were relatively small it was viable for us to process annual memberships manually, but as we approach 500 members that is no longer practical so we have moved to an automated system. I tried this out myself with my own renewal recently, and I found it pretty straightforward, and it has the added advantage of creating an updated mailing list. We realise that not everybody is on Facebook or regularly checks the website, so we intend to use this updated list to notify everyone of events like the mini-field days and sentinel hive checks. Please embrace this new system so that we don't miss anyone for these notifications.

Regards,

Cormac Farrell, President

Biosecurity update

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council reported on 16 December there have been no foraging Asian bees seen in Townsville since the destruction of the tenth nest in November.

Departmental staff are actively conducting floral sweeping and using the helium balloon to check for Asian bee drones.

Local beekeepers have commenced the second round of checking managed hives by either alcohol washes, sugar shakes or drone brood uncapping.

Tests to date have been negative for *Varroa jacobsoni*.

It is with regret that we report the resignation of Bee Biosecurity Officer, Hayley Pragert. Hayley enchanted our members with her engaging presentation last year, and provided regular information to this newsletter. **Best wishes to Hayley in her new endeavours.**

Special interest group on native bees

If you would like to participate in this group or make a suggestion, contact me at peterabbott@inet.net.au or on 0421 227 315.

Peter Abbott

Native Bee SIG Coordinator

Hive Management updates

National Bee Pest Surveillance Program

To sign up, simply contact either the ACT NBSP co-ordinators: Jeff Matsen or Frank Derwent or one of the six National Bee Pest Surveillance Program team leaders below:

- * Sentinel Team 1: Cormac Farrell jagungal1@gmail.com
- * Sentinel Team 2: John Grubb the.grubbs@gmail.com
- * Sentinel Team 3: Dick Johnson bindaree@netspeed.com.au
- * Sentinel Team 4: Alan Wade alanlynnewade@me.com
and Steve O'Hearn gooster777@gmail.com
- * Sentinel Team 5: Frank Derwent fderwent@home.netspeed.com.au
- * Sentinel Team 6: Jeff Matsen snow.gum@hotmail.com

Open Invitation – ALL welcome

Sam Malfroy will be doing a 'Beekeeping Demo and Q&A session' at the JWA on 18th Feb from 9-11am.

This will be immediately followed by the next round of Sentinel Hive Checks starting at 11am.

Become a BAACTI hive buddy

Simply e-mail Jeff Matsen or Frank Derwent and ask to be placed on the e-mail distribution list for hive management activities. There's no specific time commitment, just come when you can and help out. No need to have any beekeeping experience. If there is enough interest, we may even be able to allocate a beehive for the year to a small group to look after under guidance - a great way to get hands on beekeeping experience if you do not have a hive at home. Good beekeeping!

Jeff Matsen, Hive Manager

snow.gum@hotmail.com

ACT Beekeepers Association

Beekeeping Field Day

Saturday 4th March 2017

Jerrabomberra Wetlands - 2 Dairy Road, Fyshwick - 10am - 4pm

DEMOS • PRESENTATIONS • STALLS

with different hive types

with bee experts

selling bee supplies





Dr Doug Sommerville

Dr Doug Sommerville is the technical specialist for honey bees at the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI). At the Field Day, Doug will be presenting on essential beekeeping principles - perfect for beginners. He will also be sharing his expertise on how to choose a hive and selecting plants for a bee friendly garden. With 40 years of beekeeping experience, Doug has done extensive research in many aspects of beekeeping, including pollination and honey bee nutrition. Doug keeps over 100 hives and his knowledge and practical approach to beekeeping will appeal to beekeepers of all levels.

Elizabeth Frost

Elizabeth Frost is the Honey Bee Education Officer at Tocal Agricultural College (NSW DPI) where she develops and delivers a nationally accredited beekeeping courses mapped to the Certificate III in Beekeeping.

With a trainer's eye- Liz will guide Field Day participants through a thorough hive inspection and show beekeepers how to submit suspect larval smears to NSW Vet Labs.

Liz will also be sharing her experience working with the 'Bee Informed Partnership' in the USA, where she assessed commercial migratory bee hives for a national survey on good beekeeping practices.

Liz's enthusiastic and vocational approach to beekeeping will motivate beekeepers to run home to inspect their hives!



Adrian Iodice

Adrian Iodice is one of the pioneers of the Natural Beekeeping movement in Australia. After beekeeping with conventional hives for many years, Adrian travelled to Germany to study at the 'Mellifera Centre for Organic Beekeeping'.

Adrian continues to research, practice and teach natural, sustainable beekeeping throughout Australia and will be bringing his passion and guidance to the Field Day, where he will present on the principles of natural beekeeping.

The natural beekeeping movement is committed to restoring ecological integrity and focusing on the health of bees. It seeks to shift the mindset of beekeeping from honey production to a more holistic and harmonious approach that works with the bees rather than against them. Learn more about natural beekeeping with one of Australia's most respected practitioners!



The following vendors will be attending...

Bee Gentle Warre Hives offers hand crafted, made to order, warre hives
Contact Caroline for more details: caroline.minnear@gmail.com

Bees R Us will be bringing a variety of beekeeping supplies and Braidwood honey!
www.beesrus.com.au
scott@beesrus.com.au

Better Bee Hives will be selling all parts of the colourful TechnosetBEE hives - built to last
www.betterbeehives.com.au
bbh@iinet.net.au

Bindaree Bee Supplies from Murrumbateman has all the bits and pieces needed by beekeepers
sales2@bindaree.com.au
www.bindaree.com.au

Bluebees Board Producers will be selling their unique Bluebees board, an invention designed to assist hives effectively control small hive beetle
www.bluebees.com.au
bluebees@optusnet.com.au

Dunc's Honey will be bringing a range of beekeeping supplies, including their distinctive ventilated bee suit!
www.duncshoney.com.au
duncan@duncshoney.com.au

Stone Dog Meadery is an artisan meadery dedicated to producing distinctive meads from the best sources of honey
www.stonedog.com.au
info@stonedog.com.au

Coffee provided by O'Connor favourites... Sly Fox Coffee
www.slyfoxcoffee.com

Save on shipping! Pre-order from vendors and pick it up on the day!

The ACT Beekeepers Association is proud to host ACT for Bees, a community based organisation raising awareness of the importance of bees for pollination of our food.

More Field Day news to be announced! Stay tuned...



Training Update

CIT Courses on Backyard Beekeeping at Jerrabomberra Wetlands

The third and final CIT beekeeping course for 2016 was conducted on 26 November and 3 December. Of the two courses held at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Training Centre (JWTC), I feel this was the most successful. Notwithstanding, there are some aspects of the course that need further attention, for example, frame making. We require dedicated work benches to conduct this session and follow up action will be taken in pursuing a satisfactory solution within the facilities that the JWTC training precinct has to offer.

Training Overview

At JWTC, I am confident that the Association has the makings of a first class training centre which should, if properly managed, serve the Association for many years to come. Much effort is involved in conducting training courses for association members and the general public, and I wish to thank those members involved in setting up, presenting and tutoring the students. In particular, I wish to thank Jon Justin and Dermot Asis Sha'Non for their time and commitment in sharing the training management workload. I also wish to thank the Hive Management team for their support in establishing and maintaining the two apiaries at Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

A training schedule has yet to be drawn up for 2017. However, I would anticipate that a number of short courses/workshops will be conducted during our Winter months. For example, 'Introduction to Beekeeping' attracted a lot of support, however, consideration will be given to covering other aspects of beekeeping.

John Grubb

Association Training Manager

Email: the.grubbs@gmail.com

Movie review

Mr Holmes (2015) Mr Sherlock Holmes (played by **Ian McKellen** of Gandalf fame) has been retired for some years, with only his bees and a housekeeper and her inquisitive son for company. He must overcome his fading memory to solve one last case in this suspenseful, beautifully shot film.

The story of his bees and the housekeeper's son is told with a light touch, and is accurate and non-sensationalist. An absorbing story for hot summer nights.

Moving a hive

Cormac Farrell

One of the questions that we are often asked is how to move a hive. We have had a lot of new members set up a hive in one position in their yard, only to realise that this is not an ideal spot. It is fairly common to have to move a hive within our back-yards. Most recently I had to move hives to make way for a new fence. When I was starting I always found it a bit nerve-wracking, but with a bit of planning it has become routine.

Safety

Always move a hive in full gear, even if it is a docile hive. Bees do not like sharp movements, and it is the equivalent of someone picking up your house and giving it a good shake while you are asleep. Not a pleasant way to wake up!

Be aware that it is common for Redback spiders to take up residence under your hives. We recently had a contractor on one of our work sites bitten when he reached into an inspection pit with bare hands.

Not fun, always wear gloves.

Safety for the bees is also important. If your hive doesn't have a screened bottom board make sure that they can breathe somehow, such as using light cloth to seal the hive entrance.

Do not rely on straps for securing the hive together - use gaffa tape on the box joins and around the top. Every time I have been lazy and not done this I have had the boxes separate, and suffered for it. A bit of preparation will make it a lot easier and more secure moving the hive.

Gradual moves

There is an old but reliable rule of thumb: move a hive one metre or 10 kilometres in one day. Bees are amazing at locking on to one location. They can adjust easily if the hive gradually, 1-2 metres per day and ideally at night.

If you have time and a reasonably clear path this is the easiest and least disruptive approach, especially if you have a young colony without much honey. Just walk it into the new position a bit at a time every few nights.

Two-stage moves

This is the most common approach: move the hive a long distance (10km+) to another site to force them to re-orient, and then leaving them for at least a week or two to fully 'lock on' to the temporary location before moving them back to their final position.

This works really well, but is labour intensive and obviously requires a second site that you can leave the bees for a while. I am lucky in that I have a second apiary outside of Canberra where I can move hives to, so this is the main way that I re-position hives.



Hives packed up and ready to go

Obscured entrance

This is the fastest method. I tried this for the first time last week, and it seems to work quite well. The hive is moved at night into its final position in one hit, and then branches are stacked at the entrance to force the bees to walk through an obstacle course before leaving. This makes them re-orient themselves, and they should 'lock on' to the new location.

You will still get some strays, so I also had a nucleus colony in the original position that was able to soak up the stray foragers. Bees will accept foragers from another hive if they are carrying nectar, and these stray foragers turned into a small but welcome windfall for the nucleus colony.

Tip: It is important to stack a lot of branches at the front – you really can't have too many. You want the foragers to get turned around a bit as they go in and out.



Our website: www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

It's all there in one handy location: information, news, forums and links. Register to take part in the forum discussions, ask a question or provide advice.

Have you taken a look?

More photos and information from our [forum](#) at the [website](#) or [Facebook](#)

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