

THE BUZZ



Issue No 379 – May 2016

The official newsletter of the Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society Inc. est 1979

President's report for May

Members once again the months have slipped by and I would like to sincerely thank Jim and Olive for hosting our last general meeting and what a day it was. I saw it as the old club back to its true form and all the members showing their happiness and support for the new comings of the club. The extension of gratitude and hospitality from Jim and Olive was a high standard and went well towards the success of the meeting. I would also like to give a shout out to Dave Elson for the excellent address he gave at our last general meeting. Hopefully the information provided by Dave will assist in the coming months for all members present at the meeting.



Photos courtesy L Thomson

I would like to thank all the members who participated in the Mudgeeraba street stall considering the weather conditions they did an excellent job. Thank you for your show of support and I look forward to the street stall next year being as successful.



Frame of brood with marked queen courtesy K Tracy

We are now back to beekeeping at its best with the next meeting being held at Alan Bett's place and weather

permitting, we intend to inspect a hive and make up boxes, frames and also other bee equipment for use when the Spring arrives. This will also give the new members the knowledge and training should they intend to maintain hives. This is the season to get acquainted with the necessary skills so to end up with a box of honey later in the year as when the Spring arrives these new members will be ready to start their own apiaries and enjoy the fruits of their labour.

John Rockley

Notes from general meeting 17 April 2016

A large, strong committee was elected comprising of a number of experienced past committee members as well as some enthusiastic new faces. Readers will find a full list of the committee and their contact details on the last page of The Buzz. A sociable luncheon followed allowing visitors and members to get to know one another and talk about their beekeeping experiences.

Following is a summary of commercial beekeeper Dave Elson's talk at the meeting.

Dave Elson's Observations on Beekeeping

With the mild weather on the Gold Coast you may think wintering your hives is not too relevant. However as the days shorten bees instinctive behaviours formed over hundreds of thousands of years are triggered thus causing them to commence storing honey as a source of essential food supply over winter. Bees seem to have the innate ability to judge future winter demand even locking older bees out of the hive, while queens will reduce or cease egg laying.

Dave said that once he had been unable to work his bees from December till April, due to an injury. Dave had brought ninety hives home, each hive having 2 frames full of brood and the rest of the brood box and the honey super were full of honey. However, upon taking them back into the field in the middle of April, by July all the hives had developed 9 frames of brood with a super full of honey. It seems as the days shorten the bees are able to take a 'holiday' conserving their energy for the coming nectar flows. You can't beat working with nature and nothing better than this for your bees.

Some beekeepers push their bees down to the bottom box but Dave's experience that hives left to winter their own way are stronger and more productive because of it. Don't take honey off your bees whenever pollen and nectar is scarce! Use only new foundation during a honey flow but the opposite (good stickies) over winter to save the hive a tremendous amount time and energy.

The bees' year starts on 22 June as the days start getting longer. If you had requeened during a honey flow, eg in December, the young queens will be able to start laying immediately. While older queens will take some 3 weeks to recommence laying. Under super as bees will take the honey up. Even with your bees on tea tree leave a super of honey on in the early spring honey flow and you will find an abundance of honey to rob later.

When the weather forecasts suggests a mild week coming up in July Dave suggests taking two outside frames of honey from the brood box up to the honey super and replacing them with frames of good stickies placed each side of the brood ball. These are for the queen to lay in and so increase the strength of the hive for the honey flow.

Dave also suggests nothing is better than sitting and watching your hives and learning from your own observations. For example young bees have hair while older bees are shiny. Check for pollen sacs being full and learn which bees are carrying nectar. A good time to observe a hive is during the afternoon orientation or cleansing flight. Learn to look at your bees and be able to judge the health of the hive.

Dave says he uses Apithors to control small hive beetle (SHB). He also says that should you lose a queen around this time of year not to attempt to requeen. If the hive has AFB destroy the bees by closing off the entrance late at night and placing a Fumitoxin pellet under the lid (non residual versus using petrol). Dave then irradiate the boxes at 15kgy which will kill any European Foul Brood (EFB) as well as American Foul Brood (AFB) spores. Killing any and all pathogens present this way means none remain. This practice of irradiation prior to reusing the boxes eliminate the possibility of further diseases re-establishing in the hive. With AFB Dave advises not bothering with practices such as shaking or other ways of trying to save infected hives as AFB spores can live for up to 40 years. It is simply a case of false economy! Visit <http://www.steritech.com.au/content/agriculture-and-pet> > for more information. (Editor's note : GCABS will shortly be arranging to pack and transport members equipment to Steritech. Keep an eye out in the June edition of the Buzz.

Dave also mentioned that following his past success that he has recently taken the time and expense to import an AFB hygienic queen at a cost of \$1,200 so as to improve his stock! Editor's note : Visit Dave's website to find out more about him < <http://www.davethebeeman.com/>>

However should a hive already be in a weakened state it will be very susceptible to disease including small hive beetle, read on...

KEEPING A HIVE STRONG IN ORDER TO CONTROL SHB

Thank you to Brian Window, Northern Rivers ABA

Management practices for beekeeping should change after the arrival of small hive beetle- what beekeepers did in the past and as described in most literature may no longer be the best practice. Most beekeepers would have changed the way they do things in some ways to cope with this pest. The object of this note is to point out a general approach with merit, even though being in many ways obvious.

Small Hive Beetle (SHB) prefers to breed in brood or in pollen, and possibly detritus in the base of the hive, and lastly in honey, which is spoiled in the process. Bees are continually removing hive beetle eggs from the hive to keep them under control, and problems arise when there are insufficient bees to protect the surfaces in the hive:- the needed change in management was to ensure that there are enough bees to cover all the surfaces, either by increasing the number of bees, or by reducing the surface area. Increasing the number of bees is great, but usually results in a decreased coverage elsewhere in the apiary. Instead, the approach of decreasing the area has much to recommend it, and should be used more often.

Accepted practice is to remove the supers from hives with reduced populations of bees, but this was often not done in the past. Now with SHB, it is almost essential. When the hive is only a brood box, it can be reduced by removing individual frames of honey, pollen and brood in that order and replacing them with foundation. (Editor's note:- frames of capped honey may be extracted, uncapped unripened honey in frames is best stored frozen to stop spoilage.) Of all types of frames, foundation has the smallest area, and unused drawn combs have the highest area.

The results of the accepted practice of hiving swarms only on foundation show how well minimising the area works. Even small swarms are able to prosper in midsummer in Northern Rivers despite hive beetles, as they draw out the foundation at their own rate.

Consider other situations.

Making up Nuclei: Nuclei are often made up with frames of brood, a frame of pollen, and a frame of honey, and extra bees. However, it is preferable to make up the nucleus with only brood frames and foundation, and to let the bees expand the hive by drawing the foundation as required. If there are not enough bees, small hive beetle can start an attack on the honey or pollen, and spread to the brood. Also, replace the frames removed from the source colony by foundation rather than drawn comb, and if necessary, remove supers.

Weak Hive due to Poor Queen or Disease or Swarming: Remove any supers until there is just the brood box, and if

necessary, remove frames in the brood box. Stop when there is good coverage by bees. Extra frames to fill up the box should be just foundation. Re-queen or otherwise treat the cause of the problem. (Editor's note:- Beekeepers may decide to use SHB traps or other deterrents in conjunction with the above management practices. Remember ensuring your hives are kept strong makes them less susceptible to any form of disease or pathogens).

Vale Gil Jones

A Member of the GCABS had heard of the passing of Past Life Member Gil Jones, and asked me about Gil's contribution to the Society. I informed him that Gil had passed away around two years ago but it was felt that newer members should be informed about the contribution of Gil and Gloria Jones to the GCABS.

For a number of years, Gil Jones and Ian Clayfield were Honey Stewards at our Field Days. They were aware of the advantage that Beekeepers with many Hives had over New Beekeeper Members with only one Hive when entering Honey Competitions. They put their heads together and re-wrote Our Society's Rules for Honey Entries at our Field Days. So entrants are now only permitted one entry per Apiary per class. A Husband and Wife team are only allowed one entry per Class. Along with the introduction of the Novice Trophy, this gives Newer Beekeeper Members a better chance to win a Prize. Unfortunately, these rules also put the GCABS at a disadvantage in Inter-club Competitions!

Gil was made a LIFE MEMBER for his dedication to the GCABS.

We were guests on many happy occasions when we conducted General & Committee Meetings at Gil & Gloria's home at Mudgeeraba. When I was Secretary of the GCABS I was once admonished by Gloria for only addressing *THE BUZZ* to G Jones and NOT G & G Jones because Gloria insisted that they were a Bee Keeping Team. The Address on the envelope was changed forthwith.

We lost Gil & Gloria when they sold out and purchased a small hobby farm near Warwick. They both continued to attend Field Days at Mudgeeraba and Ipswich. Sadly, we finally lost Gil Jones when he scummed to Cancer a couple of years ago.

GIL JONES, MAY YOU REST IN PEACE.

Col Payne, April 2016

Get to know – Society President John Rockley

I joined the Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association in 2009 and have kept bees ever since. I learnt the technique by travelling to other clubs, talking to experienced beekeepers and grabbing the opportunity to work with them whenever possible. Being handy in carpentry I manufactured most of my equipment. I have around 18 productive hives selling the honey from these hives. I built a lifter for the back of my utility so I can migrate my hives to the pollen areas. I have learnt to recognise the different

flora which helps manage the honey flow. I use and own all of my own equipment so that I am independent when working my bees. Working for commercial beekeepers has allowed me to gain a considerable amount of experience in that area. I intend to continue into the commercial beekeeping field. I love beekeeping and am always willing to help other beekeepers.

Upcoming Events

Members and interested persons. GCABS has a number of upcoming events. These events represent an opportunity not to be missed to get to know other beekeepers, share experiences and talk about bees and beekeeping with members of the public and visitors.

Sunday 15 May 2016 – GCABS Monthly Meeting

Meetings will now be held on the 3rd Sunday of the month as decided by the last general meeting. 10:00am morning tea for 10:30am practical activity.

- 1/ This month's activity being the construction and preparation of frames ready for Spring.
- 2/ In addition, weather dependant, a hive will be opened. Members and visitors should bring protective clothes to wear. Veils will be available to those who need them.
- 3/ With Show time coming up members interested in entering the honey competitions should ensure they bring along a jar of their best for constructive criticism by our registered honey judge Col Payne.
- 4/ Sell your home produce, plants, beekeeping equipment, etc on the new sale table. NB Sellers must make a contribution to the raffle. GCABS takes no responsibility for the quality of items offered for sale.
- 5/ Donations of prizes for the raffle are always appreciated.
- 6/ Members wishing to purchase equipment on the day please make sure you pre-order it with the equipment officer.
- 7/ Please bring a plate to share for morning tea and BYO chair to sit on.

Venue : Alan Betts has kindly invited us to his property at 183 Tomewin Mountain Rd, Currumbin Valley. A sign will be displayed at the property entrance. Please contact the Secretary at secretary@gcabs.net.au should you have queries.

24 to 26 June 2016 - Mudgeeraba Show Honey Competition. GCABS displays and honey sales. Show Ground, Mudgeeraba.

<http://www.mudgeerabashow.org.au/2016-mudgeeraba-show.html>

26 to 28 August 2016 - Gold Coast Show Honey Competition. GCABS displays and honey sales. Gold Coast Turf Club, Bundall. <http://www.goldcoastshow.com.au/>

13 to 14 July 2016 - Qld Beekeepers' Assn AGM & Conference Speakers include David Westervelt from Florida USA address on American Foul Brood and

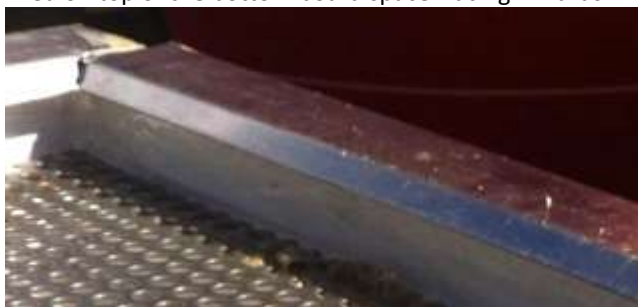
controlling SHB. www.qbabees.org.au/events/coming-events/

25 September 2016 - GCABS Field Day GCABS annual field and open day. Show Ground, Mudgeeraba. Principal speaker Des Cannon, Editor, Australasian Beekeeper Journal (ABK). Honey judging, cooking competitions, trade displays and sales, introductory talk and demonstration for interested and potential beekeepers.

Orientation Flight

New things on my radar:-

Beetle Baffle is a physical barrier that SHB cannot step over but bees can. It is about 4mm of 45 degree bent metal fixed on top of the bottom board spacer facing inwards.



<http://www.beetlebaffle.com/>

The Australian Beekeeping Manual by Robert Owen is a first rate publication with plenty of photos and practical hints to assist new beekeepers. Available to borrow from the library or buy from the Equipment Officer.



Blue Bee Jacket Australian made and light weight and easily carried in your pocket, Wearing is believing. If interested see Jim Cavanaugh who has just bought one.

Members' Forum Log onto and sign up to the new club forum which will in time become an excellent online resource where we can all share knowledge and learn....This is where you'll find it -

www.gcabs.net.au/forum

GC Botanic Gardens Open Day Join us at the Botanic Gardens for the inaugural Botanic Gardens Open Day. Community planting at 10am, plant propagation demonstrations, sale of regional plants and herbs,

informative talks and guided walks. The Herbarium will be open for tours and display. Music in the Park will begin playing at 12noon. Sizzling sausages with fried onions (if desired), sandwiches, cool drinks, tea, coffee, organic treats and ice cream. www.botanicgardensopenday.org



New Members Mentoring Any new or existing members interested in beekeeping mentoring (both gaining and providing) please contact Committee Member Kevin Bell who is acting as coordinator. The following is about mentors' assisting with a Flow Hive.

Flow Hive Assistance Member Maree Smith has a flow hive and has had assistance from club mentors. An advanced nuc was supplied to Maree in a Langstroth configuration on 12 March and this week advantage was taken of the warm weather and the development of the hive to add the Flow Hive honey super.

Library The Society has an extensive lending library including videos of our guest speakers presentations at last year's field day. Check out the catalogue on our website <http://gcabs.net.au/education/library/>

For Sale

Chest freezer \$100 - 100x61cms depth 80cm. or 39x24 inches depth 31 inches. Used it to freeze stickies for SHB for 24-48 hours. (NB Freezing will not kill AFB). The freezer is in good shape. Can deliver it to Gold Coast. Phone Graeme and Julie 0403813714

Blue Bee Jacket. This Australian made light weight

Ventilated 3 mesh full length beekeeper suit size L. \$160



Cool yet hard wearing and very protective from stings. Worn once but found to be too small for owner. Contact Kevin 0400 794 789

Local native honey flora flowering in May

Banksia, Black Sheoak, Broad-leaved Banksia, Flooded Gum, Glycine, Hickory Wattle, Golden Candlesticks, Honeysuckle Oak, Mountain Coolibah, Paper-barked Tea-tree, River Sheoak, Rose Sheoak, Tumbledown Ironbark, White Box.

NEW COMMITTEE elected at general meeting 17 April 2016

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