



# THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

Bi-monthly newsletter of the  
Amateur Beekeepers Association NSW  
[beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au)

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February/March 2017

## In this issue

- 2 **Welcome to the ABA in 2017:** membership trends, resolving online payment problems
- 3 **Doug Somerville** writes on: **The essentials of dealing with pests and diseases**
- 4 **Swarm Collector:** It's time to register on the new online system
- 5 **ABA Club competition:** get competitive with honey, wax, photos, cakes and much more
- 6 **Hive hints** Six ways to be a perfect beekeeper
- 7 **Small Hive Beetle:** Research on the nose
- 8 **SHB update** Plus test-and-tag your electrics
- 9 **Natural beekeeping.** The movement is gaining momentum around the world. Here's how to find out more
- 10 **News: ABA meets DPI** on biosecurity concerns
- 11 Snippets from our history. Plus help needed to gather information



- 12 **Easter Show:** Your chance to volunteer at Honeyland
- March Council Meeting:** where, when and what's to be discussed
- 13 **New club update.** Plus an invitation for travellers
- 14 **Bees in the news.** Scientists uncover yet more ways that bees set a stellar example.
- 15 **Inveterate Inventor** cuts 10-frame boxes down to size
- 16 **AGM in Ballina.** May 21
- 17 **ABA Tech Grants**
- 19 **Club contacts**



For a full list of ABA and club activities, look under the **EVENTS** tab on [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au)

**NEXT ABA COUNCIL MEETING – PARRAMATTA, MARCH 19. TURN TO PAGE 12**

**Deadline for next newsletter: 15 March 2017 Email [editor@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:editor@beekeepers.asn.au)**

# WELCOME TO THE ABA FOR 2017



**On behalf of the ABA, thank you for joining or renewing. The ABA values your membership and looks forward to supporting your local club and providing activities to help your beekeeping throughout 2017.**

The long-awaited PaySubs ABA membership system was implemented late last year. So how has it affected ABA numbers? The table tells it all.

Year	Start of year ABA members	End of year ABA members	Retained member ratio
2008		257	
2009	217	329	84%
2010	261	391	79%
2011	316	475	80%
2012	393	520	82%
2013	312	586	60%
2014	438	706	74%
2015	563	1006	74%
2016	670	1375	67%
2017	828		60%

Retained member ratio = membership at start of year/membership at end of previous year

The trend of recent years continues, with a significant percentage of the ABA population at the end of one year not paid up by the beginning of the next year. Between the end of 2016 and the start of 2017 over 500 members went “missing”. Past experience indicates that many are simply slow to renew and will sort out their fees in coming weeks. The online system may have discouraged a few from re-joining but any drop-off seems insignificant when you look at the pattern of other recent years.

**In 2016, the ABA more than doubled its membership between the beginning and end of the year.**

On January 1 we had 828 paid up members. Four weeks into 2017, the ABA membership stands at 950.

**Dave Wilson and Sheila Stokes**

## **PAYMENT PROBLEMS? HOW THE ABA CAN HELP**

### **Missed the early bird discount?**

If you are one of the few members who missed out on the discount for paying early because of problems using a bank or credit card online with PaySubs, the ABA can organise a refund for the additional amount paid.

### **Charged a foreign transaction fee?**

The ABA is willing to reimburse this fee imposed by some card issuers.

### **“How do I apply?”**

For individual reimbursement, email ABA Assistant Treasurer Lyall Zweck direct on [treasurer2@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:treasurer2@beekeepers.asn.au) and provide details of the claim. For a foreign transaction fee refund, an image of a relevant bank statement is needed. Refunds will be done by direct transfer so your BSB and account number will also be required.

A club may elect to pay refunds directly to the members and then claim the total amount from the ABA. A copy of a relevant bank statement is still required for foreign transaction fee refund. The process will be managed by your Membership Officer.

The ABA would particularly like to thank the club membership officers who went to great efforts to help their club members use the new system. Without their efforts, the transition would have been much rockier!

# BEEKEEPING ESSENTIALS

## with Doug Somerville

Doug Somerville is the Department of Primary Industries' Technical Specialist: Honey Bees, based at Goulburn

### THE THREE ELEMENTS TO SUCCESS

Whether you own one hive or one thousand hives, you need to focus on three essential elements to ensure your beekeeping is as successful as it can be:

- the quality of the queen bee and her progeny
- your biosecurity plan, so you are familiar with pests and diseases that affect bee hives and know what to do to keep them under control
- being conscious that honey bees are living animals and therefore they need food and water. Limitations on food and water can cause problems for the bees and, in some cases, for people.

### PART TWO

Last issue we looked at The Queen Bee. Now, here's a closer look at . . .

## BIOSECURITY – PESTS AND DISEASES

**A range of pests and diseases affect honey bees and they don't discriminate whether you have 100 hives in the apiary, or one hive in your backyard. Pests such as small hive beetle, wax moth, ants, cane toads and European wasps can all cause the beekeeper a lot of grief and, in some cases, can be fatal to the bee colony if they are not managed.**

**Small hive beetles** are arguably the most significant pest we have affecting beehives. The adult female lays eggs in the combs and when the larvae hatch, they grow and 'slime' combs. In so doing the whole contents of the hive becomes a slimy, disgusting mess, inducing the colony to abscond from the hive. Small hive beetles are more prevalent in the warmer more humid environments, but this can relate to micro climates such as sheds. A management strategy to deal with this particular pest is very important for all levels of beekeeping.

**Wax moth** – this pest of beehives is more of an issue with stored combs and not usually a problem with hives that are occupied with adult honey bees. There are various management strategies that can be implemented to manage this particular pest, including the use of cool storage.

**Ants** can be a problem in some locations, although most ant species do not bother beehives. You may wish to either move the beehives or manage the ant problem.

**Cane toads** are to be found on the North Coast. They will sit in front of a beehive (particularly at night) and gorge themselves full of bees that hang out the front. Cane toad stands have become a popular strategy to minimize the damage from these pests.

In southern NSW, European **wasps** have become well established in some locations such as the Southern Highlands, Tumut/Tumbarumba and south of Cooma. These wasps can be very damaging to honey bee colonies, particularly in the autumn. Beekeepers should monitor for their presence and implement a control strategy to minimise their impact.

The diseases that affect bee colonies include **American foulbrood, European foulbrood, chalk brood and sac brood**. These diseases collectively are called brood diseases and affect the brood or developing baby stages of the bees.



**American foulbrood** is frequently termed AFB and is a bacterial disease. If the colony contracts AFB it will eventually die. The disease will spread to other colonies by beekeepers transferring diseased material between colonies. If a diseased colony dies out, bees from healthy colonies will rob that hive and take the diseased material back to their hive thus infecting that hive. It is illegal to use antibiotics to manage AFB in mainland Australia. There is a significant body of information to assist beekeepers to identify and manage this particular disease, including the NSW Department of Primary Industries web site ([www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)).



**European foulbrood** is frequently termed EFB and is also a bacterial disease. This disease is more common in early spring, although it is known to occur at other times of the year. It is particularly prevalent in certain coastal areas south of Sydney. It is more of an issue for commercial beekeepers than recreational beekeepers and may require high levels of management from the point of view of using medicines or nutritional solutions.

Differentiating AFB from EFB or other brood diseases can be difficult. It is important to confirm what disease your bees are suffering from before you implement any control measures. Submitting appropriate samples to the NSW DPI veterinary lab will provide answers to what disease your bees may have.

**Chalk brood** is a fungal disease and is widespread and common. Bees bred to be highly hygienic and bees on high levels of nutrition, good nectar and pollen sources, usually minimise the impact of this disease.

The viruses, primarily **sac brood**, are relegated to a nuisance category and symptoms can be confused with AFB and EFB. A negative laboratory report probably means that it is a virus sample that was submitted, not AFB or EFB.

Bee diseases also affect adult bees - the primary one being **nosema**. There are two species of nosema identified in Australia – *Nosema apis* and *Nosema ceranae*. Both of these diseases are extremely hard to diagnose and identify in the field. They mostly do not have any field symptoms, except the colony does not perform well and often the population dwindles and the colony may actually die. This disease is more prevalent in large scale beekeeping where bee colonies are subjected to poor nutritional conditions and other stress factors.

Australia is still free of some major honey bee pests including varroa, tropilaelaps, tracheal mites, large hive beetle, Asian hornets and many types of exotic bees. If you ever suspect the presence of any of these exotic pests please call the exotic plant disease hotline on 1800 084 881.

**FURTHER INFORMATION** [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## LOOK OUT FOR PART THREE IN THE NEXT ISSUE



### Q: What is happening to the online swarm collector database?

**A:** It will be live very soon!

Now is the time to update your records online – so the new database has the correct information if you want members of the public to be able to contact you. (Remember: you must be a DPI registered beekeeper to be on our swarm collector database.)

- Go to **beekeepers.asn.au**, and click the **Sign In** button in the top right corner.
- If you have not used the new membership system before, click **Click here to create your password**, otherwise sign in with your email address and password.
- In the blue menu bar, click on **Member Details**.
- If you are registered as a swarm collector on the new system, you will see “Swarm Collector” listed under your name. Click on the label, update your details, save and exit the system.
- If you are not yet registered as a swarm collector click **Payments** on the blue menu bar, and then select **To Pay**.
- **Swarm collector** is listed under optional extras. (Don’t worry: it is free!) Click through, add your details, save and exit.

**Great! Now you are ready for when the new system goes live.**

# ABA Club Competition 2017

## IS YOUR BRANCH ENTERING?

The Colonel Pulling competition is on again in a new and improved format. It will be held in conjunction with the ABA Annual General Meeting at Ballina on May 21.

The competition is between the member branches of the Amateur Beekeepers Association of NSW.

Traditionally the club that is the outright winner is awarded the coveted "Col Pulling Shield". This year will see a special shield awarded to the most successful small club, with club population factored into the final scores.

### The Quiz (20%)

The quiz consists of 20 questions answered on the day of the AGM by a team of members from each branch. Eddie Sijnstra is the quiz master.

### Apiary Products (30%)

The apiary products will be judged in the following categories:

Liquid honey – light

Liquid honey – medium amber

Liquid honey – dark

Creamed honey

Comb honey – one full depth comb

Beeswax block

Honey cake

**The honey-based cake category is new for 2017.**

**The cake should be submitted with its recipe.**

Judging of hive products will be by Geoff

Manning, and cooking products by Margaret Stonier. The Apiary Products section will be scaled to a mark out of 30.



### Branch Report (30%)

The Branch Report should be a summary of the activities of the branch over the year. It should include the number of financial members, a summary of fees levied on members, the number of meetings held, the number of field days held, the average attendance at meetings and the average attendance at field days.

The total will be scaled to a mark out of 30. This will be judged by Wendy Wilson.

### Photo Competition (20%)



A series of up to 3 photos from each branch/club can be submitted for judging. The theme for the 2017 photograph competition is: **Bee Club Fun**

The photographs must have been taken by a financial member of the beekeeping branch/club that is submitting the images.

This year the photography score will be scaled to a mark out of 20. The judging will be by Henry Kalaf.

A more detailed set of guidelines will be emailed to club secretaries soon.

Dave Wilson and Elke Haeger

# HIVE HINTS What does a good beekeeper do?

Frank Karabaic lives by these six simple rules

1. **USE STANDARD EQUIPMENT.** Full depth Langstroth hives with 8 or 10 frames are very popular. Supers with frames of the same size can be interchanged.
2. **BE CONSIDERATE OF NEIGHBOURS.** Site hives so bees' flight path doesn't cross a neighbour's yard, a path, playground or other public area. If necessary, construct or grow a barrier. Bees need to collect water. Provide some on site so your bees don't visit swimming pools.
3. **REQUEEN.** This is one of the best things you can do. Young queens maximise brood production and suppress swarming. Queens can be bought or raised. They must be from good, healthy stock.
4. **CONTROL DISEASE AND PESTS.** Learn to recognise the basic problems and how to deal with them by borrowing books or DVDs and attending field days.
5. **SUPER COLONIES ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS.** Assess the population. If bees are covering all combs and spilling out of the hive, they need a super or at least full honey combs replaced with empty ones. Assess the amount of stored honey. If the first super is 2/3 full, place one with empty combs under it. Assess future prospects for foraging. If the outlook is poor, a super would not be needed. Swarming tendencies can be lessened by giving bees more space.
6. **REGISTER WITH THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.** The 2-year fee is small. It's the law. Fines apply.

## ***How does the ABA make decisions that affect the membership?***

*Decisions are made at ABA Council Meetings held at least four times a year.*

*Financial members are entitled to contribute to those decisions and are encouraged to attend council meetings. Ideally all clubs are represented.*

*ABA council meetings are announced in this newsletter and are posted to the calendar on our website [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au)*

*SEE PAGE 12 for details of the next meeting at Parramatta on March 19.*

**LOVE THOSE BEES!**

## **Words of wisdom: Emilé Warré in *Beekeeping for All***



***“One good thing about bees is they always seem to be the same. Some years pass; we age, we see friends disappear, revolutionary changes take effect, illusions fall one after the other, and yet, among the flowers, the bees that we have known from childhood modulate the same musical phrases, with the same freshness of voice.***

***Time seems not to have taken its toll on them, and, as they hide themselves to die, as we never help them in their agony, we can imagine that we always have before our eyes those that enchanted our early childhood, those too who, during our long existence, have provided for us the happiest hours and the rarest of friends.”***

# Research update

## WAGING WAR ON Small Hive Beetle

**Anyone whose hives have been slimed by SHB won't quickly forget the signature scent of fermenting honey**

Now a Queensland-based research team is using those distinctive odours to find ways to lure SHB away from healthy hives and trap the flying insects before they can wreak their havoc.

Dr Diana Leemon (pictured), principal research scientist with Queensland Department of Agriculture, and Dr Andrew Hayes, a chemical ecologist with University of the Sunshine Coast, started field tests in mid January of a synthetic



SHB lure placed up to 100 metres from apiary sites. Compounds in the lure mirror the natural odours that the researchers have identified as attracting beetles to hives.

“We know beetles pick up the scent of a hive on the prevailing winds,” explains Dr Leemon. Once the hive is infested with SHB and starts to melt down, the smell of yeast from the larvae and the fermenting honey seems to act “as a beacon to attract more beetles.”

Dr Leemon became interested in the topic after losing a couple of her own hobby hives to slime outs many years ago. “It’s a terrible sight.” As a mycologist, she recognised the smell of yeast in the odour of decay and began working with Dr Hayes to map the processes, smells and compounds as a hive melts down.

Already the team has developed a blend of natural substances that seems to attract SHB. The natural lure is not effective for very long and so has limited practical use. The aim of the duo’s current research is to test a synthetic mix that keeps working outside of hives to lure beetles before they get near the bees. It needs to attract enough of the destructive insects to leave hives healthy and able to protect themselves.

The research is revealing important information about how SHB behave and when they are most active. “We know they’re highly active a day or two after rain and can pick up the scent of a hive from a very long way away,” Dr Leemon warns.

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## Meanwhile: Update on last issue's quiz

Last issue we ran a quiz on SHB. Eddie Sijnstra has a few extra comments to make based his experience in Nepean/Blue Mountains

**Q3. It is very true that colonies under stress are likely targets for SHB attack.** But the strength of a colony not necessarily determines an attack either. I have seen colonies at maximum strength, still overrun by hive beetle. I do not understand why this can even be possible. One should also be aware that colonies that have just had an extraction and have the empty combs put straight back on for clean-up are also easy targets for SHB attack.

**Q6. I question the low water solubility of Fipronil.** We have had two strong colonies that somehow lost the forward sloping angle of the hive. They both had an Apithor trap fitted on the hive floor. After rain, water came in contact with the trap and three quarters of the bees died pretty much in a pile in front of and on the hive floor due to poisoning. So beware! Make sure your hives slope forward five to ten degrees so water will always run out.

**Q10. A soil drench in my opinion is highly recommended** after you discover hive beetle attack. I had one case referred to me where eight out of 10 hives in an apiary were overrun. If no soil drench was applied we would be actively assisting beetle numbers to increase at great speed. This would not be good for any remaining hives in the vicinity. Why would beetles fly, say, ten kilometres if they can find a good home within a few metres? I have heard that keeping chickens in the apiary is a good way of larval control, but I have not personally observed that this is so. But chickens soon peck out a frame with larvae, be it wax moth or SHB larvae.

**Q15. While soapy water may clean up the mess** after hive beetle attack, it is my experience that after a "slime-out" the bees will not work the frames when we think the frames are nclean again. My advice is to remove the wax and refit with foundation.

## Electric tagging of club loan equipment



### DAVE WILSON WRITES:

**Many clubs have beekeeping gear available for loan to members.** I suspect that electric decappers are included and in some cases the extractor is an electric unit. Such equipment should be "tested and tagged" by an approved person. This ensures that it is electrically safe and free of any mechanical damage that may cause it to be unsafe.

A Google search in

your area will identify an approved person to do this. A portable RCD (residual current device, pictured right) is also recommended. In the case of a potential electrocution this device will turn the appliance off. The RCD is connected to the power point and the appliance is connected to the RCD.





## What is . . . ?

. . . natural beekeeping . . . sustainable  
beekeeping . . . bee-centred beekeeping  
. . . apicentric beekeeping



*Sun hive: the design was developed in Germany and is now being adapted around the world to include removable frames.  
Photo: Heidi Herrmann*

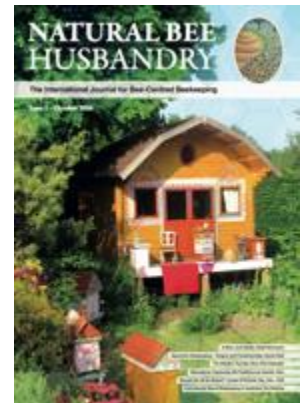
They're all terms used for a beekeeping philosophy that celebrates the bee and aims to help it flourish with minimal human manipulation of the colony.

David Heaf, who together with his wife has translated from French Abbé Warré's *Beekeeping For All*, describes the resurgence in interest in natural beekeeping as "a confluence of several streams of beekeepers in various countries who have begun to place more emphasis on meeting the needs of the essential nature of the bee rather than treating it as a machine for producing honey."

Warré and Kenyan top bar hives are two of the most popular ways to adopt many of the principles of natural beekeeping. In a recent survey, 8 per cent of ABA members already kept Warré hives, nearly 7 per cent have top bar hives and yet five times as many said they were interested in learning about these different methods.

Want to discover more about a bee-centred approach that is sometimes simply an adaptation of conventional apiary practices but can be stridently at odds with modern beekeeping industry? The internet is bursting with sites and groups all over the world. One good place to start for overview of the topic and lots of resources is the website of the Natural Beekeeping Trust, a UK based charity.

At the moment the **first issue of the new journal *Natural Bee Husbandry* is a FREE DOWNLOAD** via [naturalbeekeepingtrust.org](http://naturalbeekeepingtrust.org). Yearly subscriptions are \$28 but you don't have to sign up for anything to get the first issue free. (Do bear in mind this is a UK publication and beekeepers in Australia are legally required to keep bees in hives with frames that allow easy inspection of brood.)



In this first issue, Tim Malfroy writes about his commercial Warré beekeeping operation in NSW.

## Fast facts

- A TYPICAL HONEYBEE COLONY PRODUCES ABOUT FIVE LITRES OF ROYAL JELLY A YEAR
- IF A HONEYBEE STINGS ANOTHER BEE, SHE CAN RETRIEVE HER STING

# ABA meets with DPI to discuss the new biosecurity act

## ABA Biosecurity Officer Doug Purdie reports:

ABA representatives met with Emma Cottage and Chris Anderson from the DPI on January 18.

The purpose of the meeting in Parramatta was to discuss what effect changes to legislation might have on our members and for us give feedback about those changes.

Only a very small part of the new act will relate to bees. Most of it relates to all sorts of non-bee related biosecurity risks.

The documents can be downloaded here

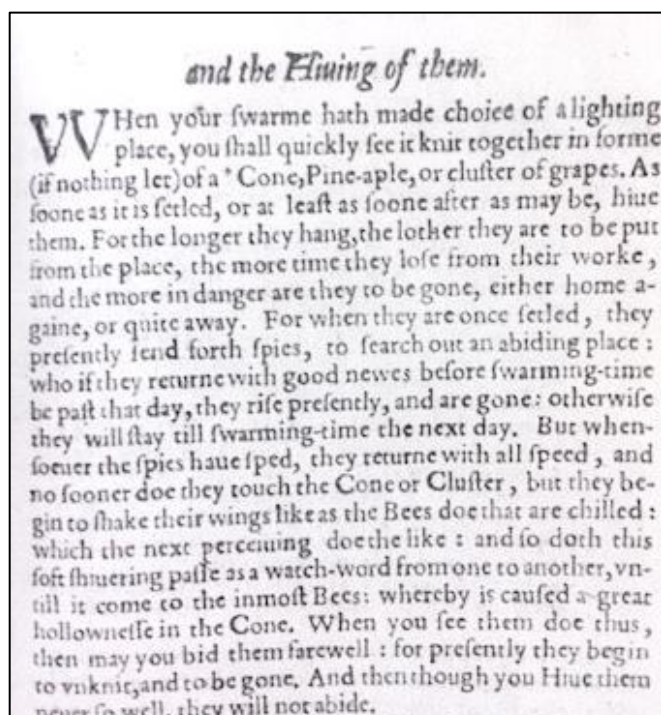
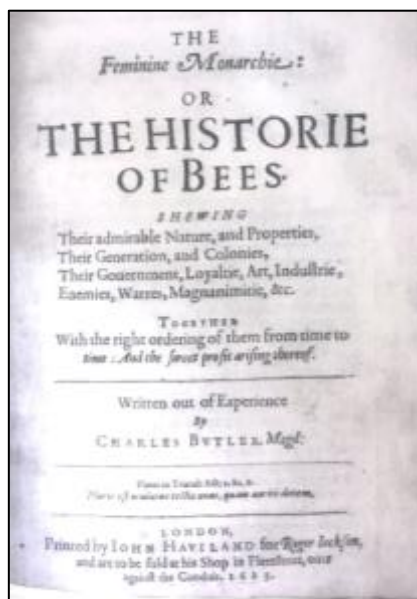
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/biosecurity-act-2015>

Major points we discussed were:

- To retain AFB as a notifiable disease
- That beekeepers with a small number of hives (0-4) be granted free registration
- Why is small hive beetle still a notifiable pest? (We learned this is because of export rules.)
- That the DPI urban beekeeping guidelines remain in place

It was a very productive meeting and we are confident that the regulatory changes will result in better enforcement of those that break the rules.

## Handling a swarm – according to Charles Butler, in 1623



# History of the ABA *Report of Progress*

Jim Wright is well immersed in research about the association's history. Here's a glimpse at what he's been uncovering.



First, thanks to the ABA Council and members for support in this venture. And special thanks for allowing me to bring the archives home to study. I've spent many hours trawling through them which would not have been possible to do by visits to Sutherland.

I've made rewarding progress – about 150 pages of early draft. There are lots of gaps and lots of questions which will, I fear, remain unanswered, notably of the years 1954 to 1989 when records were taken with the seceding North Shore Branch.

I need information from each of the 20 branches (except Hunter Valley which I am well familiar with). Contact me if you need another copy of the detailed list of questions. Photographs would also be welcome!

Meanwhile, interesting trivia turns up and adds a touch of levity (and sanity?) to the task. Here are two examples (right and below).

*When Milton Perry, an early editor of the ABA's newsletter, died in February 1990, the president, in his eulogy, quoted this poem which Milton had published in the May 1987 issue.*

*No author was named; maybe it was Milton Perry himself.*

*(My apologies to the many ladies in our Association. This was obviously written in a male chauvinistic era. JW)*

## A BEEKEEPER

HE IS SIX FOOT FOUR AND AS BROAD AS A DOOR

A CLASSICAL EDUCATION AND A WIZARD WITH A SAW

A BOTANIST OF NOTE, AN INVENTOR WITHOUT PEER

AN INGENIOUS MECHANIC AND A BRILLIANT ENGINEER

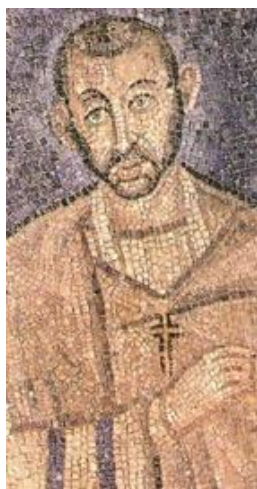
AN ENERGETIC SALESMAN, A DRIVER WHO NEVER TIRES

AN ENTHUSIASTIC FORESTER WATCHING BLOSSOMS, SITES  
AND FIRES

WHAT MANNER OF MAN NEEDS TALENTS LIKE THESE

YOU KNOW HIM WELL - A KEEPER OF BEES.

**IF YOU CAN HELP ME WITH DETAILS OF CLUB HISTORIES: email me on [jwr81149@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jwr81149@bigpond.net.au)**



*Early mosaic of Ambrose that might be a contemporary portrait*

## *Did you know there is a Patron Saint of Beekeeping?*

*(Edited version of entry in the ABA newsletter, loose leaf undated but possibly late 1990s. Author was not recorded but the editor was either Richard Foote or Chris Thompson)*

***Saint Ambrose lived in Italy during the late Roman empire after Christianity had become the established religion. He was a successful governor of one of the provinces in Italy. When the local bishop died, the locals asked him to become bishop. After some persuasion he agreed.***

***At that time the Church was embroiled in a theological dispute between the conservative view and another held by people called Arians. Ambrose took the conservative view and helped push the Arians off the stage. They were eventually branded heretics. Ambrose also had some views about the separate role of Church and State in government. He was quite free with his advice to the Emperor at the time. His role in Church affairs and government was probably the main reason for being made a saint.***

***His connection with beekeeping was very slim. It was said that as a baby asleep in his father's courtyard bees gathered around him and several were seen to go in and out of his open mouth without waking him. This was regarded as an omen to the effect that he would say many sweet things in later life.***

# Volunteers needed for Honeyland at 2017 Royal Easter Show

**BRUCE WHITE, CO-ORDINATOR HONEYLAND 2017 WRITES:**

Honeyland promotes beekeeping best practice and apiary products at the Sydney Royal Show with four live bee displays each day. This year's show starts on Thursday April 6 and finishes on Wednesday April 19. The NSW Apiarists Association would appreciate your help to promote the industry and sell products.

Volunteers get the chance to meet other beekeepers, both amateur and commercial, and have a fun day with time off to enjoy the show. The show starts at 9am and finishes at 8 30pm.

Volunteers get a free entry pass to the show that includes free public transport by city bus, train and ferry.

Members of the NSW Amateur Beekeepers Association have made a valuable contribution to Honeyland at previous shows.

If you can volunteer, please pick the day or days and contact Bruce White on [blwhite11@hotmail.com](mailto:blwhite11@hotmail.com) or phone 96346792. Your help would be much appreciated.

Please include your name, address, phone and email. The cut-off day for volunteers is March 11.



## *ABA Council Meeting 9am March 19 James Ruse High School, Carlingford*

The next ABA Council meeting is at the home of the Parramatta branch.

**Agriculture Classroom**

**James Ruse High School**

**17-31 Felton Rd**

**Carlingford NSW 2118**

The entrance to the classroom is off Baker St.

This meeting, like all Council meetings, is open to members of all clubs. A lunch will be provided at nominal cost.

Some matters to be considered.

- Report of ABA executive meeting with DPI officers about the new biosecurity legislation
- How the online membership system is operating
- New logo
- Constitution changes to be considered at AGM
- Bee hives in urban areas – some councils are opposed



# Newest clubs in the ABA

The ABA now has 20 branches with the recent formal additions of the Mudgee Bee Group (MBG) and Northern Beaches Beekeepers (NBB).

## MUDGEE

The MBG is an offshoot of the local group Watershed Landcare. With quite a bit of interest already generated through some local advertising and the Mudgee Small Farms Field Day held last July, the group is up and buzzing quite quickly. At least 18 members are already on the books.



The club has a small apiary and is already planning its first beekeeping training. Bruce White will be conducting a two-day course in Backyard Beekeeping over the weekend of February 25/26. The cost is \$260, with MBG and Watershed Landcare group members entitled to a discounted rate of \$175. Please contact [claudia.wythes@watershedlandcare.com.au](mailto:claudia.wythes@watershedlandcare.com.au) for further details and to secure your spot.

## NORTHERN BEACHES

The NBB was officially formed just before Christmas. It is a result of a lot of effort put in by the ABA to hold the Pittwater Field Day last October to gauge interest and then set up an inaugural meeting in late November.

Although still small in numbers, the branch has a strong committee and we will see an increase in numbers as time passes.

**I urge all members if you're travelling around the state on business or holidays to jump on the ABA website and see if there is a branch close by. Look up when its meetings are and just maybe one will be when you can attend.**

**You'll be welcomed with open arms and it's a great way to broaden your knowledge on all things bees.**

**Len Verrenkamp  
Branch Development Officer  
0418 438 667**

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# Bees in the news



A quick roundup of recent stories from print and online media, with links to the full story, video or audio. Click on the links to read original story

**HUMANS AND HONEY BEES MAY GO BACK 9000 YEARS** The molecular fingerprint of beeswax has been identified on pot fragments from times when humans were just beginning to farm

<http://theplate.nationalgeographic.com/2015/11/12/clay-fragments-suggest-how-long-weve-been-relying-on-honeybees/>

**DID WE EVOLVE TO BE BRAINY BECAUSE ANCIENT PEOPLE ATE HONEY?**

The evidence points that way

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/humans-the-honey-hunters-9760262/>

**THE BIGGEST PRODUCER OF HONEY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION IS . . . ?**

Around 16 million hives are spread across the trading bloc. Find out which countries are topping the production tables

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stephenmcgrath/2017/01/22/romania-tops-eu-honey-market-but-its-a-bitter-sweet-affair>

**BEES CAN RECOGNISE A FAMILIAR FACE**

Here's scientific proof that bees can tell one face from another – and how they do it

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/02/science/02bees.html>

**BEES CAN PULL STRINGS**

First, train 23 bumble bees. Allow five hours for teaching each bee. Then use them as demonstrators to teach other bees. Video the results, and you have a viral hit!

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/10/06/scientists-taught-a-few-bees-to-pull-on-a-string-for-a-treat-then-a-bunch-of-other-bees-caught-on/>

**BEES ARE TEACHING SILICON VALLEY SCIENTISTS ABOUT INTELLIGENCE**

Bees have long understood The Wisdom of Crowds – that you achieve more by working together. It may be the foundation of better artificial intelligence

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20161215-why-bees-could-be-the-secret-to-superhuman-intelligence>

**BEES, WASPS AND HORNETS KILLED 27 AUSTRALIANS IN 13 YEARS** Melbourne University analysis of statistics showed bees, wasps and hornets send more people to hospital than spiders and twice as many as snakes (although snakes kill more). But the most dangerous animal is the horse (74); 26 died from shark attack; 23 were fatally attacked by dogs; and crocodiles snatched 19 in Australia.

<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/venomous-stings-and-bites-lie-close-to-home>



# The Inveterate Inventor turns 10-frame boxes into 8-framers

## Read on for fix when your Langstroth boxes need cutting down to size



Some beekeepers find 10-frame boxes too heavy particularly when laden with honey. On other occasions beekeepers who use eight-frame boxes obtain some 10-frame boxes. Having a mix of box sizes can be a problem since the boxes are not interchangeable from hive to hive.

This image shows the two box types: same depth (241 mm) and length (508 mm) but different widths – eight frame (352 mm) and ten frame (406 mm).

So how can you cut a 10-frame box down? At first glance – no problem. After all the length and height are the same – only the width to adjust.



Pulling the 10-frame box apart is the first challenge. The corners are typically finger jointed and cross nailed. Simply hammering apart the sides usually causes a significant amount of damage.

I am sure there are many ways of doing this – this one works for me.

1. Cut down through the nails and finger joints on the ends of the box close to the sides. Using a metal cutting saw makes short work of any nails or screws. This reduces the width of the ends – that's fine since we're reducing the width of the box from 406mm to 352mm.

2. Use pliers to remove the cut-off finger-joint ends on the sides along with their fixing nails.

3. The box ends now need to be trimmed to the correct width. This is not easily done with the cut off nails still present so punch them below the cutting line.

Mark it so you know how far to punch the nails to be clear of the saw cut.

4. Cut the box sides to the new width 352mm.

5. Now the long sides need to have the redundant finger joints cut away, taking care to leave the top 'finger' in place.

(Remember to keep the side hand-holds correctly orientated. There is no prize for having them upside down when the box is assembled and painted!)





This picture shows how the saw cut on the side panel does not reach to top. A small section of timber is left in place. This carries across the rebate in the sides that carries the frames. The black lines on the image represent the saw cut lines.

6. The exposed ends should be dipped in copper naphthanate or other timber preservative. Leaving them stand in a dipper allows the preservative to soak up into the end grain of the timber.

7. The box can then be reassembled. Given that the finger joints have been replaced with a simple butt joint, screws provide a better fix than nailing.

8. The counter sunk screw heads can be filled and any cracks and gaps filled. Priming the box with a "grip lock" primer will ensure that the priming paint really adheres to the original paint. A coat of exterior

paint finishes the work. With care, a good quality finish is possible.



## Annual General Meeting **Ballina** May 21

The Annual General Meeting is to be held in Ballina at the Ballina RSL on Sunday May 21, with the traditional club dinner the night before. The Colonel Pulling competition will be held as part of the meeting. This event is being hosted by the Northern Rivers Branch of the ABA.

**Beekeeping does provide a reason for breaking out of the ordinary.  
Step outside the normal – travel to Ballina, attend the ABA AGM and have a trip away!**



# ABA TECHNOLOGY GRANT

## Clubs should apply before June 30

The significant increase in ABA membership over recent years has increased the workload for both the ABA executive and club officers. The ABA is implementing new technology to support clubs and simplify ABA administration.

The current initiatives include a **suite of Google apps** which enable:

**Emails.** Clubs can access generic club email accounts eg

Parramatta.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au

Parramatta.membership@beekeepers.asn.au

The advantage of these is that they will easily transfer to different people as the club officers change and they will allow everyone to keep their personal email accounts private.

### **Calendars**

Each branch will have its own calendar which will automatically be included in the events page on the ABA website. The branch calendar can also be embedded in a local club website.

Branches can have a non-public calendar for event planning and organization.

### **Storage drive**

Each branch will have access to its own 30GB of storage.

### **Web based membership system**

This is based on the PaySubs system. It allows clubs to print membership lists and reports and to email club members. It allows individual members to make membership and insurance payments and adjust their membership details.

When fully implemented it should relieve clubs of the majority of work associated with collection and transfer of member payments.

The ABA is offering a grant is for a maximum of \$400 to all clubs with 10 or more members. The grant is designed to support clubs in implementing this technology.

Some suggestions that were made at a recent ABA meeting:

**A simple laptop.** The applications mentioned are all web or browser based so no MS applications such Word or Excel are needed on local machines. If required the ABA will configure a laptop for Google and PaySubs.

**A mobile broadband device.** This will allow clubs to connect to the internet via the mobile phone network. This would help the club membership officer or members access PaySubs to adjust member details or to pay accounts. This would be ideal for clubs who do not have regular internet access at their meeting venue.

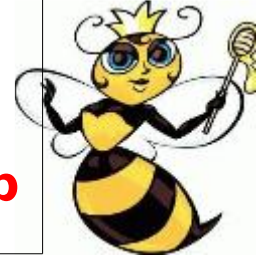
**A portable printer.** This would allow printing in locations with no regular mains power.

Application forms should reach club secretaries soon.

For further information, contact *Miskell Hampton, ABA Education Officer*

*[education@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:education@beekeepers.asn.au)*

## Queen Grafting and Introducing Mated Queens to Established Colonies Workshop



**18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

- Demystify the task of raising queens yourself
- A refresher for those who have raised queens before
- Practical demonstration of equipment and procedures
- **YOU** do your **OWN** graft and check it on day 2
- **Make up a nucleus hive**
  - Demonstration of various methods of introducing mated queens to established colonies
  - For experienced bee-keepers
  - **Your grafts that take, you can take home!**

**Where:** Bee Garden of Illawarra Amateur Beekeepers Association,  
Eton Street, Sutherland

**Date:** Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017

**Registration:** 8.30 am      **Time:** 9 am – 5 pm

**Cost:** **\$330** includes morning and afternoon tea. Bee Association members 10% fee reduction. Lunch \$10 per day, please indicate on registration form.

**Includes:** Two days of instruction from an expert bee-keeper with the opportunity to handle live bees, DPI Book "Queen Bee Breeding", USB containing NSW DPI Queen Bee Publications, Rearing Queen Bees Prime facts and a host of other material.

**Instruction:** by Bruce White, OAM

Retired Technical Specialist Apiculture NSW Department of Primary Industries

In this workshop you will work with live bees and undertake practical task of Queen Bee grafting. The two days will allow students to graft a queen larva on day 1 and follow up on day 2 to see how well your graft has taken.

Students will prepare a starter hive for cell rearing, graft a queen larva, raise the cells and make up a mating nucleus hive.

- *Thanks for your interest and we look forward to seeing you on the workshop.*
- Phone for further information and registration forms
- Paul 0403 175 708    Martin 0477 383 482
- Liane 02 9318 2519 evenings

*beekeepers.asn.au For the latest on biosecurity threats, club events, contacts and to see your membership details*



# ABA Club contacts

Note: to join a club, go to [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au) and click APPLY TO JOIN.  
Applications are forwarded to individual clubs for approval

Club	Contact	Email address
Bathurst	Mary Keys	<a href="mailto:secretary@bathurstbeekeepers.org.au">secretary@bathurstbeekeepers.org.au</a>
Bega Valley	Fay Steward	<a href="mailto:secretary@begavalleybeeclub.org.au">secretary@begavalleybeeclub.org.au</a>
Central Coast	Max Rae	<a href="mailto:mx_rae@yahoo.com.au">mx_rae@yahoo.com.au</a>
Goulburn District	Lee Towle	<a href="mailto:secretary@goulburnbeekeepers.asn.au">secretary@goulburnbeekeepers.asn.au</a>
Hawkesbury	Sheila Stokes	<a href="mailto:Hawkesbury.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au">Hawkesbury.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Hunter Valley	Linda Winn	<a href="mailto:pclawinn@bigpond.net.au">pclawinn@bigpond.net.au</a>
Illawarra	Geoff Henning	<a href="mailto:lincres@ozemail.com.au">lincres@ozemail.com.au</a>
Inner West	Mel Barrs	<a href="mailto:melbarrs@hotmail.com">melbarrs@hotmail.com</a>
Macarthur	Caroline Clatworthy	<a href="mailto:secretary@macbeekeepers.asn.au">secretary@macbeekeepers.asn.au</a>
Manning Valley	Vicki Grace	<a href="mailto:covenanttreasures@msn.com">covenanttreasures@msn.com</a>
Mid North Coast	Peter Dickson Smith	<a href="mailto:pdsbml@bigpond.com">pdsbml@bigpond.com</a>
Mudgee	Claudia Wythes	<a href="mailto:Claudia.wythes@watershedlandcare.com.au">Claudia.wythes@watershedlandcare.com.au</a>
Nepean	Sheila Stokes	<a href="mailto:secretary@nepeanbeekeepers.com">secretary@nepeanbeekeepers.com</a>
Northern Beaches	Paul Hoskinson	<a href="mailto:NorthernBeaches.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au">NorthernBeaches.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au</a>
Northern Rivers	Shirley Ashman	<a href="mailto:Shirley.Ashman@bigpond.com">Shirley.Ashman@bigpond.com</a>
Parramatta	Robyn Alderton	<a href="mailto:parramattabeekeepers@hotmail.com">parramattabeekeepers@hotmail.com</a>
Shoalhaven	Tim Haddad	<a href="mailto:shoalhavenbeekeepers@gmail.com">shoalhavenbeekeepers@gmail.com</a>
Southern Highlands	Jim Stonier	<a href="mailto:jwstonier@bigpond.com">jwstonier@bigpond.com</a>
Sydney Central	Lisa Blythe	<a href="mailto:secretary@sydneybeeclub.org.au">secretary@sydneybeeclub.org.au</a>
Yass and District	Linda Swadling	<a href="mailto:yass@beekeepers.asn.au">yass@beekeepers.asn.au</a>

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