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BEE JOURNAL

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Book Review: *Urban Beekeeping...* page 10



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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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OCTOBER 2024 - Volume 105 - No 10

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Cover photo: Ann Thorburn

This double pink poppy is proving very popular with the bees

**Deadline for copy for the November journal is
10pm on Friday 1st of November 2024.**

The Australian Bee Journal seeks to publish contributions dealing with all aspects of beekeeping.
Statements expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the VAA Inc or the editor.
Editor: Annette Engstrom

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The Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc. (VAA)



The VAA was founded in 1892 and is the peak body for beekeeping in Victoria.

The Association advocates to federal, state, and local governments to protect and improve Victoria's honey resources and to ensure beekeepers' interests are safeguarded and promoted. We work to secure effective legislation and encourage scientific investigation and research in all aspects of beekeeping.

Our achievements include:

- Introducing the Victorian Apiary Code of Practice allowing bees to be kept in urban areas
- Contributing to the new Apiculture on Public Lands Policy through our involvement with the Buzz Committee
- Working with Plant Health Australia which contributed to the development of the Australian Biosecurity Code of Practice.

The VAA advocates for the beekeeping industry on behalf of all beekeepers in Victoria.

Management

The VAA Board meets a minimum of six times a year.

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Finance & Insurance

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All beekeepers and interested groups are welcome to join the VAA.

Membership benefits include:

- The VAA's monthly magazine *Australian Bee Journal* (ABJ) including one free classified ad per year
- Access to the members' only section of the VAA website vicbeekeepers.com.au
- Discounts for beekeeping services and products, including insurance
- Borrowing rights to the extensive VAA library
- Voting rights at VAA regional group meetings and the annual VAA state conference
- Opportunity to participate in and contribute to VAA sub-committees
- Opportunity to meet and share ideas with other beekeepers at local group meetings, field days, shows and conferences
- Opportunity to contribute to advocacy to government and development of policy on beekeeping

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How to join

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to request a membership form.



www.vicbeekeepers.com.au

President's Report

As I start this report the Melbourne Royal show is well on the way. Apart from the first day the weather has been mild and the attendance seems to be good. It is a fantastic experience to be one of the volunteers at the show, members from across Victoria turning up, many for several days. Communicating with the public and promoting beekeeping and hive products brings out the best of our members and association. Thank you to all that contributed to this year's show, we couldn't do it without your support.

As from today the Association has a new Treasurer. Sam Muir was one of the applicants for the Administrative Officer position and has excellent accounting qualifications and experience. The Treasurer position was a perfect fit for her as she was looking for a part-time position that would be somewhat flexible. We welcome Sam and look forward to working with her.

One of the good things about the varroa incursion is that we will have beekeepers trained as Industry Liaison Officers (ILO). Plant Health Australia will conduct two training sessions, one in Queensland and one in Victoria. The Board has approached several beekeepers and encouraged them to make themselves available. The need for a group of trained ILO'S became apparent when varroa was detected in NSW. Their role was vital

to get advice to the decision makers to ensure that we achieved good outcomes.

Almond pollination is done for another 12 months. Unfortunately, we again received reports of dying bees and brood. It appears that it may be sometime before a solution is found. Reports indicated that one apiary has no issue but another apiary 400 meters away has a real issue with dead bees on the ground and dying young bees in the hive. It is of vital importance that all bee deaths are reported to the broker, AgVic and the Association. With a better understanding of the extent of the issue we may be able to lobby for more support and urgency to find a solution for this problem.

The Association received the sad news of the passing of Edna Callaway. She was well known in beekeeping circles due to her involvement in the beekeeping industry for many years. Our deepest sympathy to Lindsay and the Callaway family.

This morning, I received the sad news of the sudden passing of Nikki Jones' husband, Robbie. Members will know Nikki as the Victorian Biosecurity Officer. Our deepest sympathy to Nikki and the Jones family.

John van Weeghel
President

Yahoo News, 23 September 2024: When a 16-year-old opened his package from Australia Post, what he discovered inside left him close to tears. The incident, which saw an Express Post satchel containing dead bees delivered to the teenager, has prompted an apology from the postal service and a speech in Parliament calling for an overhaul of packaging rules. Read the full story [here](#)



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Is Your Business Varroa Mite Ready?

Commercial beekeepers in western, central and north-east Victoria recently participated in the latest Apiary Farm Business Resilience Course series.

Agriculture Victoria Senior Project Officer Resilience and Recovery, James Rowe, said the course included business benchmarking, calculating gross margins and succession planning in addition to safety, varroa management and staff management.

‘We have been delivering the Farm Business Resilience program to Victorian commercial beekeeping businesses for the last two years.

‘The program aims to support beekeepers in considering their long-term goals, business management, investment priorities, succession plans and biosecurity risks.’

Vicki Elliott, a participant at the Ararat event said the course has been invaluable for their business.

‘Knowing how to assess our current situation has allowed us to confidently plan where we would like to go in the future and which areas we need to focus on,’ said Ms Elliott.

‘As part of the course, participants worked one-on-one with an experienced business management consultant to develop or review their business plan,’ said Mr Rowe.

Lisa and Greg Watters participated in the course in

Wangaratta and said the presenters tailored the course to suit individual businesses and delivered the content using real examples.

‘Discussions were participant-led, enabling us to share issues relevant to our businesses. Information and tools were provided, giving us the confidence to use these within our business plans’, added Mr and Mrs Watters.

Further sessions are planned for Central Victoria and Yarra Valley later this year, delivered over two days.

Mr Rowe encouraged beekeeping businesses to express their interest in future courses.

‘The program is open to all businesses, no matter the business age or experience.’

If you are interested in participating in the program, contact James Rowe at

james.rowe@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

This course has been developed by Agriculture Victoria in partnership with the Victorian Apiarists Association and Beekeepers Branch of the Victorian Farmers Federation.

The Farm Business Resilience Program is jointly funded through the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund and the Victorian Government’s Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund.



Photo: Jamie Trimby - BBVAA Spring Inspection

Bendigo Branch Maintenance Day



22 September 2024

By Peta Dawe

A cool spring day greeted us bathing everything with sunshine in between clouds. It was a good turnout for members of the branch, with two new members being welcomed into the group. With bee suits in hand, and learning to be done, Robert McDonald took the lead for the club, and prior to stepping out to look at the hives he gave some tips on checking the bees and hives.



Above: A few tips prior to checking the hives

Protective clothing on and out to the bees we go. Smoker lit and into checking each of the hives. Prior to opening the hive Rob provided advice on how to approach the hive, and explained why we should stand and look to see which way the bees are flying to and from the hive. All good information especially for our new members.

Below: Waiting for the smoker to be lit



Ready to go



Above: Preparing to check the hives (Continued on page 8)



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Bendigo Branch Maintenance Day, cont'd

(Continued from page 7)

Throughout the demonstration Rob continued to ask questions of the group to ensure they knew what they were looking for and what they were looking at. The group had lots of questions for him as well. As usual, each hive presented differently, with the group asking more questions and learning along the way. Some more confident members also provided their insight into how they managed their hives. This resulted in numerous questions and discussions about how to manage their hives.



Checking the hive



A young beekeeper in the making

Below: Checking the hive - more smoke



Rob gave practical demonstrations of the various conditions that a beekeeper might be presented with on inspection of their hives, and the practical way to deal with these issues. An example was the need to remove drone comb by scratching the bottoms of the frames.



What can you see on the frame?



Checking the frames



Teaching them young

Overall, a very successful day was had by all. Members learnt many methods to manage their hives. The practical knowledge and ability to actually see the conditions presented by the hive, and watch and listen to an experienced beekeeper and how they managed was invaluable.



Photo: John van Weeghel - artichoke thistle

Introducing Samantha Muir

Samantha Muir has recently joined the Victorian Apiarists' Association as Treasurer.

Sam brings with her vast experience across a broad range of accounting and finance areas, and has recently retired with nearly 28 years of experience as a Certified Practising Accountant with certifications in Company Secretarial, executive leadership and treasury manage-

ment.

With a love of all things bees and bee keeping that she gained from her father, a passionate apiarist for many years, Sam is looking forward to assisting the Association and getting to know the members over the next few months.

2024 UK NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

By John Kennedy

The 101st series of the National Honey Show, held at Sandown Park Racecourse in Surrey, an easy 45 minute train ride outside London, is confirmed for Thursday 24 to Sunday 26 October.

The organising committee has just released its lecture program with the details available at their [website](#)

It is too detailed to report in full here save to say that, as always, it's very topical.

The lectures are free to attend, while there is also a workshops program at modest cost.

Most of the lecture series are about topical issues to UK beekeepers and internationally, including solutions to the varroa mite and the Asian hornet

Subsidiary topics include Microscopy, Drugs and Bee Health, Honey Bee Pheromone, Acarine, AI and Applying Deep Learning to the Detection of Invasive Hornets.

The best way to find the up to date information to be provided by the 11 prominent presenters (as well as their personal profiles and experience) is to refer to the show's [website](#).

On the lighter side, there is also an Historic Beekeeping Film series, embracing the historical aspects of bees, the environment and beekeeping.

There are of course all the usual presentations of a major beekeeping trade show, huge competitions and awards for honey and hive products. and the opportunity to meet many hundreds of UK and European beekeepers.

I've been able to attend the Show twice (in conjunction with well-planned overseas travels) and regard it as an essential event in beekeeping knowledge gaining.



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Book Review

By John Kennedy

Photos supplied by the publisher

URBAN BEEKEEPING Highly Recommended

Just this month, October, a new, highly valuable Australian-written and published book has been released. It comes highly recommended.

It carries the title of *URBAN BEEKEEPING* - with a subtitle of *The City as a Hive*.

It is authored by Cormac Farrell, a professional environmental scientist, in the employ of a well-known Canberra-based engineering consultancy.

He has graduated from a recreational beekeeper to virtually a professional beekeeper.

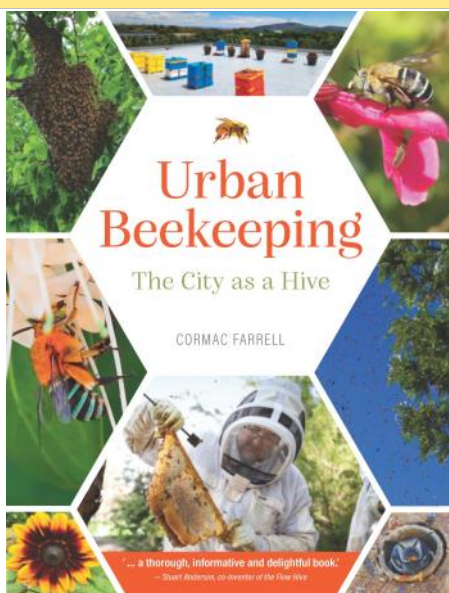
Cormac says he “had to work hard to convince my boss that it was not a crazy idea to keep bees on the balcony of our office in the city”.

He has long been active in the local ACT For Bees group, and he also gained the impressive title of ‘Head Beekeeper for the Australian Parliament’ managing the apiary within the parliamentary compound as well as others in the Canberra region.

This is a hardback book of 250 pages that are extremely well illustrated, in colour, and it carries a retail list price of \$A55.

Cormac takes the reader through: the various bee species to determine which one will work best in your space. How to set up your apiary and the best ways to feed your bees with planting choices, and connecting with your bees and how to manage your hive – either a Langstroth or a Flow Hive.

A couple of lines in his introduction to the book caught my eye.



Front cover of the book



Slovenian hive



Cormac Farrell

It reads “I want this book to be part instruction manual for urban beekeepers and part manual for city planners, governments and citizens in creating a more sustainable way of life.

“When I was growing up there was a very clear sense that cities were for people, with green spaces to be carefully controlled, to look pretty but basically useless.

“Wildlife and wild things were to be left in the bush.

“It always seemed a bit dull to me – why can’t we have some wild things in town?

“And why can’t we grow at least some of our food in our cities?”

I think we all acknowledge that the growth of small scale or recreational beekeeping has been the big factor in the overall growth of public interest in bees over the last decade.

This excellent book is a great summation of urban beekeeping with a foresight into how it will continue to expand into the future.

Urban Beekeeping is published by [Exisle Publishing](#) (also the source of Bob Owens landmark text *The Australian Beekeeping Manual*).

Buy this book for yourself, your bee club or interest group - you won’t be disappointed by Cormac Farrell’s wisdom, experience and his insights into the future.



Bamboo hotel



Rooftop hives - Four National

New Book Release

By John Kennedy

WORLD ATLAS OF HONEY

The blockbuster bee book publishing event of the year has now arrived with the release of *The World Atlas of Honey* written by C. Marina Marchese and published by the University of California.

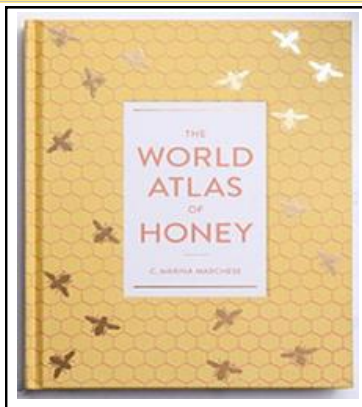
It is a hardback book of 272 pages, with a list price of around 30 pounds sterling or equivalents.

It comes highly reviewed as a showcase of the wonderful world of honey and with comments like "a beautifully illustrated global survey of the flavour of honey".

And further, the book includes profiles of more than 80 countries and the botanical sources of honey in each.

The text illustrations and photos by honey expert Marina Marchese "takes readers through the global history of honey production, from the earliest beekeepers to today's harvest".

Marina Marchese, of Italian origin is already a best-



selling author of four books on honey and inter alia beekeeping.

She is a member of the *Italian National Register of Experts in Sensory Analysis* and founder of the *American Honey Tasting Society* as well as operating her own Red Bee Honey business in the USA.

The book is compiled in two parts, first a section devoted to honey, its terroir, how to taste like a sommelier, defects, honey fraud, health, medicine and beauty, and honey in cooking.

Part two is a region-by-region review embracing the honeys of North and South America, Europe, Asia and finally Oceania, on a country by country basis - hence 80 odd.

The Oceania section includes Australia, New Zealand and surprisingly Pitcairn Island.

At the asking price it's clearly not a book for every beekeeper but for those keen to understand the flavour of honey, where it comes from and how it rates, it will be an important review source.

BBC - 17 August 2024

How to detect fake honey without opening the jar: Scientists said they have found a way to detect fake honey products without opening the jar. Researchers at Cranfield University, Bedfordshire, claim to have successfully tested two new methods to authenticate UK honey quickly and accurately. Dr Maria Anastasiadi, the project's lead scientist, said she hoped the breakthrough would "take the sting out of honey fraud". It could help "protect consumers and verify supply chains", she added. Read the full story [here](#)

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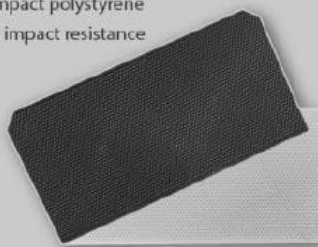
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At Last, A Real Honey Cookbook

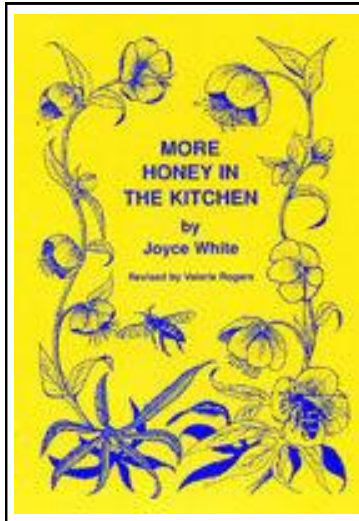
By John Kennedy

Let's face it cookbooks are like legs – pretty much everyone has one (or two!). Only a very few are considered classics and referred to over decades, while many are produced as seasonal stocking fillers and usually disappear from bookseller's shelves very quickly.

But a real honest cookbook is a household joy.

Northern Bee Books (www.northernbeebooks.co.uk) has republished a honey cookbook, of which a review in 1978 described it as “an economical bouquet of country goodness ... certainly a present worth having”.

The book titled *More Honey in the Kitchen* was written by Joyce White, a Scottish cooking demonstrator, a lecturer in beekeeping, and a beekeeper, and was released in 1978.



Now the reprint edition with updates added and revision by her daughter, Valerie Rogers, is a work of 12 chapters plus additional ones on beeswax and other products, and Mead.

It's a book of 65 pages in which all the cookery types and applications for honey are described in detail.

There is guidance at the beginning on oven temperatures, the accurate composition of honey and then some recipes from the past and an index.

It's also relatively inexpensive at 7 pounds 99 pence (plus \$A conversion and postage).

For those of us who see the need for effort to spruce up the uses and consumption of honey in the kitchen this

seems the right place to start.

In short, it's inexpensive, time proven and historically a best seller.

New Book Release

By John Kennedy

HEART OF THE HIVE

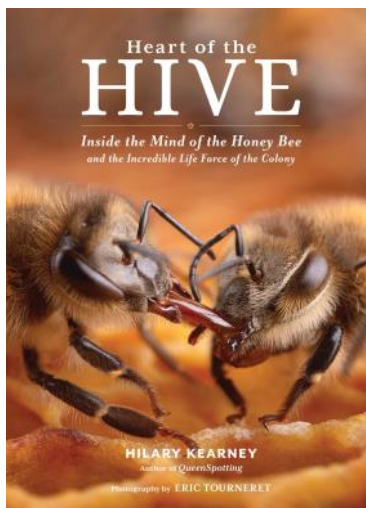
by Hilary Kearney

Just released in the USA, this is the new book by Hilary, also the author of *Queen Spotting*.

It's a hard back of 200 pages and carries the subtitle of *Inside the Mind of the Honey Bee*.

There are outstanding illustrations by noted photographer Eric Tournet, and the list price is \$A50.

Hilary notes in her introduction “In stories, hidden worlds are found in wardrobes and down rabbit holes, but I



found mine in a beehive.

“It's a wonderful world I can enter with the zip of my bee suit - a golden realm, vibrating and fragrant, full of treasures, surprises and mysteries”.

In nine chapters the author explores the life of a bee, the bee's business, what bees like, buzzwords, drama queens. and what bees don't like.

The final chapter, nine, is devoted to the universal bee – the characteristics and why we like them.

It's not really a technical volume but a great introduction and primer to the honeybee that performs its educative role particularly well.

NORTH AMERICAN HONEY BEE EXPO - JANUARY 2025

By John Kennedy

The North American Honey Bee Expo has nominated its dates for 2025. It will be held January 2-4 in the Exhibition Centre in Louisville, Kentucky; and this season will embrace both a honey and related products category, and another huge Trade show.

Public entry to the show is free, and already there is evidence that major equipment suppliers are advancing new product ideas ready for release at the Expo, or booking bigger display stands.

The Honey Show has multiple categories for entries in classes ranging from Honey to Beeswax, Beverages including Meads, and food products made involving honey. There is also an Arts & Crafts component including Photography. In addition there is a co-running speakers program.

This year's edition (2024) also held in the same venue, was judged as a sell out event, so NAHBE is quite rightfully claiming the position as the most important exhibition for beekeepers at all levels in the USA.

The organisers have only recently made available the video presentations from major researchers and industry participants of the calibre of Bob Binnie, Marta Spivak et al.

The videos, involving over 30 hours of time, can be accessed at a charge of \$US75.

For more information on the 2025 NAHBE see <https://www.nahbexpo.com>



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New Bee Lab To Tackle Varroa

A new Bee Research and Extension Lab launched recently at Southern Cross University. It will undertake critical honey bee research and extension, with a focus on managing the devastating *Varroa destructor* mite.

Despite the largest biosecurity response in Australia's history, Varroa continues to pose one of the biggest threats to Australia's beekeeping and pollination-dependent industries. Around one third of our food comes from crops pollinated by bees.

"Varroa is the leading cause of colony losses globally, and our bees in Australia are naive to this pest. We have 35 pollination-dependent crops in Australia that need healthy honey bees for viable pollination," said Director of the new Bee Research and Extension Lab, Dr Cooper Schouten.

"The majority of our bee labs in Australian universities have been closing down as their leaders, among many technical experts in the industry, have retired. We urgently need more capacity.

"At Southern Cross University we are seeking to fill part of that void by developing new research to support local beekeepers, and ensure our food security."

A priority for the new Bee Lab will be undertaking applied research on more affordable Varroa controls, developing practical guides with beekeepers and working with queen bee breeders to develop more Varroa-tolerant queen bees for Australian conditions.

"We have decades of Varroa research and industry experience we can draw on from other countries, yet Australia has unique climate, biodiversity and agricultural systems.

"To protect against Varroa, beekeepers will need to invest significant time and resources to monitor, manage and replace colonies, and we can work with them to develop and communicate the latest research about how to do that and remain profitable."

If left unchecked, the parasitic Varroa mite can devastate bee populations, feeding on pupae and adult bees, spreading viruses, crippling bees' ability to fly, orientate and communicate and eventually causing hive collapse.

The potential impact of Varroa – between lost in-

come and the additional expenses of intervention for beekeepers – has been estimated at up to AUD1.31 billion over the next 30 years by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).

The beekeeping industry also faces challenges such as low honey prices, high operational costs, declining access to floral resources, difficulty finding skilled staff and other major biosecurity threats like *Tropilaelaps* mites and bee viruses (e.g. Deformed wing virus).

As the leader of numerous beekeeping projects in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji, Dr Schouten has seen firsthand the barriers and solutions to beekeeping industry development, as well as the benefits of collaboration.

"The Bee Lab seeks to conduct applied research to keep beekeepers in business and develop a community of practice, so that our industry has more opportunities to learn from one another; from commercial beekeepers, extension agents and researchers. Together we can have the widest reach and benefit from the range of input such a community can provide," he said.

Professor Mary Spongberg said she was delighted to see the new lab begin to take shape.

"This is critical work and it has national and also global significance. At Southern Cross University we are solutions-focused, bringing industry along with us to ensure better outcomes for local beekeepers, but also research that has global impact."

The new Bee Lab builds on a decade of research and extension work by the Bees for Sustainable Livelihoods (B4SL) research group at the University. Funded by Southern Cross and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), B4SL has driven projects to increase the profitability and resilience of beekeeping industries and businesses across the Indo-Pacific region.

The new [Bee Lab](#) is based in the Northern Rivers. The on-campus apiary provides opportunities for student engagement and a Bee Club for aspiring beekeepers to learn more about the University's research and the art and science of beekeeping.

VALUE IN HISTORIC BEE BOOKS

By John Kennedy

At a recent online auction held in Canberra, two books of interest to beekeepers were keenly sought.

The auction, described as being 'works of Scientific & Natural History', saw some 60 works offered.

Lot 23 described as "A Near Antique Copy Of A Key to Eucalypts 1934 - a guide with descriptions of over 500 species of eucalypts by W.F Blakely, leather bound with a typed addendum and hand written notes. Stamped for the ex. Commonwealth Forestry Bureau, very good used condition".

This lot attracted significant interest and sold for \$A106 plus 22% buyers premium.

Lot 41 was described as "An antique hardback edition of the ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture by A.I. and E.R. Root, published The A.I Root Company, Medina Ohio 1910".

It was in good antique condition, worn cover, discoloration to pages.

It sold to the same bidder as above for \$A90 plus 22% commission.



Photo: Lindsay Callaway

New Book Release

By John Kennedy

VARROA MANAGEMENT

A practical guide on how to manage Varroa mites in honey bee colonies

by Kirsty Stainton

At a time when there is still a dearth of readily available texts on the mite, the publisher of this 140 page paperback Northern Bee Books (www.northernbeebooks.co.uk), says it holds an “all-encompassing approach to practical varroa management, the perfect antidote to confused and informed beekeepers alike”.

They add “Stainton’s clear advocacy of the sound use of natural products over reliance on synthetic miticides that are developing levels of mite resistance and potential barriers to future mite control is very welcome news and one that regulators should not ignore”.

And “with clear vision she acknowledges the reversible nature of such resistance to synthetics (a natural process given time and cessation of their use) and



makes a good case for the use of all control reagents in rotation and in circumstances, such as ambient temperature boundaries, where each treatment will work”.

A review of the book posed by Alan Wade of the Canberra Region beekeepers Newsletter earlier this year poses “a more nuanced understanding of bees comes with other practical measures, such as hive splitting, but for this you will need to read the book”.

Ok, so where do you get it and at what costs?

Northern Bee books usually offer prompt mail delivery from the UK on placing your order.

The Varroa Management book by Kirsty Stainton has a list price of 17 pound 95 pence sterling, and you will need to contact them by email for \$A conversion plus postage.

I’d be looking at around the \$A40 mark and regard it as a worthwhile investment for most levels of beekeepers.

The deadline for the November Bee Journal is 10pm on Friday 1st of November



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CVAA Annual Conference

By Jamie Trimby

On 16th August the Central Victorian Apiarists Association held their 59th Annual Conference with a great line up of speakers from a variety of industry related areas.

Organic Beekeeper Steve Fuller produces honey, and provides pollination services for several crops. Steve presented a number of sessions, being very open, considered and approachable on topics and questions posed.

Steve discussed ongoing Varroa vigilance regular monitoring (12 weeks), constant planning, continual flexibility adapting his plans, knowing your mite threshold percentage to implement action, identifying your action plan.

He covered the necessity of having a variety of integrated pest managements at your disposal, planning and allowing for feeding to sustain bees post treatment, planning leaving bees in place to restore bee health, forcing additional biomechanical brood breaks interrupting Varroa reproduction.

Steve is president of the Crop Pollination Association of Australia, a representative on National Park committees acknowledging the importance of advocating from within resource decision making bodies. Likewise crop pollination representation, as Varroa incursion impacts crops that historically have been pollinated by non-managed bee colonies, positioning for fair compensation in future pollination service negotiations. Representing beekeeper interests in cropping insecticide and fungicide research, again greater results are achieved from within.

Members of the audience pointed out Steve and his brother's incredible resilience having dealt with significant quantities of hive losses from the extensive North-

ern NSW floods followed by bushfires. Steve conveyed the importance of beekeepers supporting each other, keeping socially connected, and positive wellbeing of community members.

James Rowe, Biosecurity Manager at Agriculture Victoria, provided an overview of the Farm Business Resilience Program run by the department at Epsom - a number of the audience had completed the program and were positive about their program experience, planning structures and knowledge gained.

Ian Cane has represented the VAA on natural resources for a number of decades, and spoke passionately encouraging beekeepers to take up advocating for beekeeping on public lands and championing timing, location and the extent of planned burns in areas of significant resources on public land through representation with Forest Fire Management Victoria.

He also talked about continuing fostering the relationships with First Nations Peoples in collaborating on park management relating to future access to floral resources areas, and burn sensitivities.

He discussed aligning with government departments encouraging "Think Globally, Act Locally" to promote beekeeping industry significance in concerns of our increasing population as part of the solution to securing Australia's food supply through pollination and appropriate resource access to maintain healthy bee population.

Lynette Heenan provided a touching account of the Mount Cole fire, exploring numerous insightful lessons learnt from observations that had a positive effect on slowing the progress of the fire front; including noting where the water velocity was slowed in waterways increasing absorption in the surrounding area and retarding and halting the fire in places.

Photo: Jamie Trimby - Borage Pollen



VAA Melbourne Section Report

We are into Spring. The VAA MS had its first VDO reality bite. Training courses are in. Perfect varroa practice makes perfect varroa management. Let's keep supporting each other.

The VAA MS has a new Chairperson, James Doery. Mike Love is now the Deputy Chairperson.

We thank Mike for his time as Chairperson. We also thank John van Weeghel, now an ordinary committee member, for his time as Deputy Chairperson. Thanks to all of the VAA MS Committee for their commitment each year.

A VDO a day keeps varroa away ... sort of.

For the September meeting, the VAA MS invited Tony Wilsmore to tell about VDOs and to give us an update on the support available to all beekeepers.

Tony is a Victorian Varroa Development Officer (VDO) and a Victorian NVMMP-accredited trainer. (And I know that NVMMP just rolled off your tongue as National Varroa Mite Management Program.) The VDOs work throughout Victoria helping groups and individuals learn the ins and outs of varroa management. The Trainers are engaged to deliver the NVMMP Varroa Workshops across the state.

The focus was on the mite, the transition to management activity and how we can and should act for our personal and collective benefit. We thank Tony for his presentation and we look forward to the support of the VDOs over the next few years.

Varroa Workshops

Have you registered for a Varroa Workshop near you? The workshop locations and dates are continuously expanding. The workshops advertised, so far, are advertised by Humanitix as the workshops are confirmed by NVMMP. Keep an eye on new workshop locations, and if you see one you would prefer to attend, then cancel your registration at the first one. There will probably be a waiting list and a grateful beekeeper gets to go.

Courses

Our beekeeper development courses are filling up. The October Beginner's Course has started by the time this article gets to you. The November Queen rearing course may well be booked out by the time this article gets to you, but check it out anyway on the VAA Events webpage.

Community

Let's support each other as we go through the transition to management. Many of us will have a buddy or two for our bee work. Finding someone who has a similar approach will enable more experiences and hence faster learning, as well as a second brain to nut out those many new decisions.

The beekeeping community includes you even if you are not aware or even that keen on the idea. Keeping an open mind to who is around you and how they

(Continued on page 20)

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VAA Melbourne Section Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 19)

are faring is a responsibility that we should all take on board. Especially the many beekeepers who are not registered and may be missing out on vital information and opportunities. Offer a friendly glove to everyone to keep our bees and beekeepers in good shape.

It's Spring

We all have our Spring hives to manage. All the other pests and diseases are still in play. Let's keep our hives in top shape so that when varroa arrives at our hives we will not have even bigger complications.

The swarm collection service is running on the VAA website. You can either use this service or join as a collector.

Your record keeping will be even more important when varroa arrives, so getting into that very good habit now will save angst later on. BeeMAX is an option for your records and it is also the place where your required checks for AFB and varroa can be registered. This information is for our collective benefit in tracking risks to bees all over Victoria.

Coming up

The monthly meetings have very good snacks and suppers. The library collection is available for your

perusal each month. We are revamping the VAA MS shop to hold the helpful items, so browse the shop next time you are in. Frame pieces and wax foundation are popular. Do you need a comb scraper to help with uncapping drones?

The October meeting is on the fifth Thursday of the month, not the fourth, so put Thursday 31 October into that calendar of yours and even put a note on the fourth Thursday to not go out!

Rob Kerr

VAA Melbourne Section Secretary

For the VAA Melbourne Section Committee

The Melbourne Section Committee has undergone some changes since the most recent 2024 AGM.

We would like to announce the revised committee structure, replacing the details from the August 2024 ABJ.

Chairperson: A/Prof James Doery

Deputy Chairperson: Mike Love

Secretary: Rob Kerr

Treasurer: Janet Conos

Committee Members: Isles Arthur, David Baskett, Angelique Drew, Garry Dumergue, John Van Weeghel, Dr. Andrew Wootton

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AHBIC September Newsletter Extracts

While most beekeepers are busy with spring build up, honey production and providing pollination services, AHBIC continues to work behind the scenes.

AHBIC recently held an executive meeting where the decision was made to hold the 5th Australian Bee Congress in Adelaide in 2026. This has started the Congress sub committee that is being chaired by Shona Blair, who was also the chair for the 2022 Congress in Sydney. This sub committee will be meeting regularly to embark on the task of organising the congress which is set for 18th to 22nd June 2026.

The Code of Practice is being revised and beekeepers from all states will be asked for feedback.

Congratulations to Lindsay Callaway of Warral Maldon Honey, who was voted onto the board of directors at the recent BQual AGM. Lindsay has completed a director's course and his company has been Quality Assurance (QA) accredited with BQual for many years.

Lindsay also has international QA accreditation. I am certain Lindsay will become a valuable addition to the BQual board.

Unfortunately, another Australian generational beekeeping family has lost a stalwart of the industry with the passing of dear Shirley Stephens in Tasmania. Shirley was recently commended by her peers in industry by being presented the Goodacre Award for services to the bee industry. Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with Shirley's family at this time.

AHBIC executive have planned meetings with APVMA to gain a deeper understanding of what AHBIC can do to attract and register more varroa management tools. We also have meetings scheduled with Plant Health Australia in the coming months.

Stephen Targett
Chair

SOUTH EAST USA BEEKEEPERS HIT BY HELENE

By John Kennedy

Beekeepers in States like Florida, North and South Carolina are reporting major losses from Helene, the Category 4 storm, or cyclone, that hit them at the end of September.

Helene has caused major structural damage to communities, personal property and infrastructure including to major interstate highways.

There has also been substantial flooding from what in some places was over 30 inches of rainfall.

Storm surges have caused many hives in low lying areas to be lost.

A number of places that are recorded as never flooding have been severely damaged by devastation, the Florida State Beekeepers Association reports.



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The Australian Pollination Strategy

The Australian Pollination Strategy will bring together representatives from all sectors impacted by pollination to create an informed, strategic and coordinated approach to Australia's pollination supply.

The Australian Pollination Strategy will:

- Identify best management practices and policies for community, industry, local, state and federal government policies
- Advocate for pollinator protection across Australia, and enable actions that improve wild pollinator abundance and diversity in the landscape
- Support the development of a pollination services industry with the capacity and capability to meet the increasing demand for pollination services for agriculture and the environment
- Incorporate approaches for optimising pollination for agriculture and the environment including the use of alternative managed pollinators and augmented pollination
- Promote Integrated Pest Management to reduce the reliance on pesticide and agricultural chemicals and practices that negatively impact pollinators

The Australian Pollination Strategy will address three areas to improve pollination for associated industries and the environment including:

1. **Policy:** addressing biodiversity, biosecurity and trade policies among others and ensuring they are

optimised for pollination

2. **Research:** defining and co-ordinating research to address threats to pollinators and making pollination more efficient
3. **Extension activities:** supporting land managers, organisations and community groups to implement best practice strategies and techniques to optimise pollination for the benefits of agriculture and the environment simultaneously.

The Strategy will be a model of best practice, with policies aimed to optimise bees and other pollinators to leverage pollination for the benefit of the environment, biodiversity and food security.

Creating a coordinated, strategic and informed plan for Australia's pollination supply will, in turn, lead to improved planet health and global stability.

The Strategy will bring together the beekeeping industry, representatives from pollination-dependent industries, research institutes, environmental organisations, governments, policy makers, and other related sectors along the supply chain including food processing, retail and exporters.

For more information visit the [Australian Pollination Strategy](https://www.australianpollinationstrategy.org.au).

For more information on how to take part in the Australian Pollination Strategy email aps@whenbee.foundation.org.au

*Extract from the
When Bee Foundation October 2024 Newsletter*

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VAA Bendigo Branch Report

The 43rd Annual Beekeeping Field Day on 13th October was a huge day in our calendar, with a great deal of work by Peta and the committee. A huge thank you to all our volunteers, especially our amazing people in the canteen. Without everyone's time and effort we couldn't run the day. Many volunteers are Beekeepers who have helped out for many years, we greatly appreciate their continued support and contribution, thank you.

Varroa continues to be a significant focus for presentations, the common threads being plan, prepare, monitor, mateship, supporting each other to contribute to resilient individuals and community. Beginner Beekeeper equipment sessions and open hive demonstrations providing safe space for asking questions. I hope Beekeepers commercial, part-time and recreational alike enjoy the day socializing, catching up with friends old and new. Thanks to our Beekeeping Trade Suppliers and their ongoing commitment to the Field day.

Branch meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at Lakeside Hotel Bendigo, please notify Rob McDonald if having a meal from 6pm, meeting starts at 7pm. Ashton, a Varroa Development Officer (VDO), will be providing a brief at the October meeting covering the various services VDO's can offer in practical and theoretical formats.

Septembers guest speaker Lindsay Callaway provided a sneak peek to attendees on the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Varroa, and lessons learned from a variety of international commercial beekeepers managing Varroa through numerous seasons.

The Bendigo Branch members offer our condolences to Lindsay and the Callaway Family for their recent loss.

Reminder - the National Varroa Mite Management Program and Bendigo Branch VAA are hosting a free Recreational Beekeepers Varroa training workshop from 9am to 3pm on Saturday 23rd November at the Bendigo District RSL. Morning tea and lunch are provided, booking online is required for catering <https://ticketing.humanitix.com/tours/varroa-management-training/>.

The workshop is free covering: understanding Varroa mite and its impacts; display a preserved Varroa specimen; the importance of monitoring and treatment thresholds; Integrated pest management and Varroa; Chemical treatment options, synthetic and organic;

Photo: Jamie Trimby - BBVAA Spring Inspection



brood location, frame rotation and management; best practice record keeping; and booklet containing the workshop material.

On Sunday 22nd September Margie and Wayne Gallagher hosted Bendigo Branch for our Spring Maintenance day. Rob McDonald led participants through six hive inspections pointing out what indicators or attributes he identified at the hive entry, population on the frames, mix of types of brood dispersed across frames, and the action he would take for a queenless hive, and swarm prevention. Weekend sessions are mostly practical days allowing interaction opportunities to ask all questions beekeeping, beneficial for newer members and social interaction equally important for experienced beekeepers.

Late September rain seemed fairly wide spread across the Northern Country, providing a much needed boost for crops, pasture, weeds and nectar sources, a boost for current and next season. In urban locations the flora is diverse with an excellent variety of pollen coming in, building bee population late September. Council street plantings of Lemon-scented gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) is well budded and flowering from late September. Yellow gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*) and Red Ironbark (*Eucalyptus tricarpa*) have tailed off but providing enough nectar to keep parrots excited. Swarming started later in Central Victoria this year, keep monitoring and managing your colonies.

All the best in beekeeping,

Jamie Trimby

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Melbourne Show Report

Another good show for the Association, sharing all things bees.

Amazingly we seemed to go through over 10,000 paddle pop tasting sticks in only 2 days or so! Lots of honey tastings! With our four varieties I think we will use almost 15-20 kilograms of honey just for free tasting at the show. It is worth it though to educate the public on what makes the honey taste different and provide education about bees.

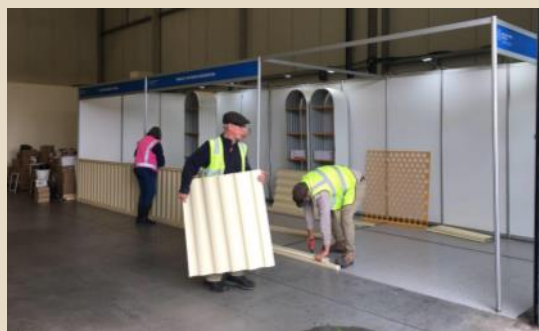
Our honey varieties this year were

- Yellow gum,
- a Stringybark,
- Giant mallee
- and Messmate.

Thank you to our members that supplied and packed the honey and also to Hive and Wellness for a donation of the jars we used for packing. All of the honey varieties have been popular with no stand out this year for tastings. Regular customers look out for us at the show to taste the different varieties, with some show goers buying up to 8kg to keep them in supply.

The bee cage and observation frame have again been popular with lots and lots of questions for our volunteers to answer. The honey nectar, strawberry honey and chilli honey have all been talking points at the show, with the show an important opportunity to showcase all things honey and all the products from the hive.

Thank you to Beechworth Honey, Goodes Honey, Hive and Wellness, and Warral Maldon for donations of honey product for our bundle bags.



Thank you also to all of our suppliers of candles, balms, soap, honey nectar, propolis, creamed honey and honey comb that allow us to stock our stand with such wonderful products.

Thank you to Peta Dawe for taking on the role of coordinating the volunteer roster, Tony Wilsmore for providing bees for the show, Mike Love for assisting to manage the stand, Ken Gell for storing the show setup and transporting to and from the show, all our setup and pack up team, and of course all our volunteers for manning our stall, selling products, making up show bags, labelling product, building the stand, opening up the display hive in the bee cage, the list goes on with all the jobs our volunteers complete.

This year we have had volunteers complete multiple shifts and multiple days, and others just complete one shift, but all is much appreciated. We have had people for the first time at the show this year and others that have been involved for over 30-40 years.

Hoping that everyone found it a worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

Hopefully this year the show will be more financially beneficial to the Association, as it has been the most important fundraiser for the Association for many years.

Again, just a big THANK YOU to everyone that has played a part in another successful VAA stand at the Melbourne show.

Well done on another great effort!

*Judy Leggett,
Chairperson,
Melbourne Show Subcommittee*



AHBIC September Newsletter Extracts

Spring has sprung, with what is for many around the country a very dry start to the season. Beekeepers are generally reporting limited prospects across most of the country with many focusing on pollination this spring.

Beekeepers have reported that the almond pollination event was quick, with generally good weather and almond growers reporting reasonable nut set. Disappointingly we have heard of beekeepers again experiencing high levels of bee deaths on almonds, but to date AHBIC has not received any direct reports from beekeepers. It is impossible for us to work on a solution if no one is reporting the issue directly to us.

Emergency Plant Pest Response levy increase

At all the state conferences around the country AHBIC has been presenting to industry the proposed 1 cent per kilogram levy increase. AHBIC has circulated the formal letter to levy payers explaining the reasons for the increase and the process that needs to be followed. The next steps in the process are outlined in the letter but involve next writing to the minister seeking the increase followed by a 30-day objection period.

Varroa Transition to Management Program

The final train the trainer event was held in Brisbane in late August. This event was well attended with VDO's and contract trainers from around the country attending to familiarise themselves with the training content.

Training is well underway in all jurisdictions with a list of dates and venues on the humanitix website. T2M

Training is now completed in Tasmania and nearing completion in NSW. VDO's are appointed and up and running in all states except SA, with VDO's in VIC busy engaging with industry at every opportunity. VDO have been busy in NSW assisting many beekeepers along the east coast as they learn to deal with Varroa.

Updates to the Code of Practice and the Biosecurity Manual have been progressing with many providing feedback to both documents. A final draft of both documents is being compiled before finalising the documents.

The Australian Coloss survey project is close to being contracted with AgriFutures in the final stages of contracting with the researchers. We expect this will be an exciting project for our industry and you will see a lot more information about it in the coming months.

Varroa treatment option

AHBIC has been meeting with the APVMA to understand if, as the peak industry association, we are doing everything within our means to attract and register as many varroa control options as possible. Our board has been exploring all options and testing them with the APVMA to see if there is more we can do within the system.

We will report back to industry in the next newsletter the outcomes of the discussions and any identified pathways for industry.

Danny LeFeuvre, CEO

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Forecasting or Backcasting

Forecasting is taking the current situation, making adjustments and playing it forward with assumptions and causal hypotheses. “We think this will happen.” “We think that if we do this differently, then that might happen instead.”

Backcasting is placing ourselves right in the future situation and reverse engineering how we got there. “This is our chosen future!” “It’s good that we did these things to make sure we got here.”

Forecasting is fine for smaller scopes or smaller time periods. It works well when the situation is defined and we know how the system works. We run the model forwards and we find a low level of deviation from reality that happens later. Forecasting the weather for tomorrow and the next day is pretty good. Forecasting the weather 7 days out seems to be still hit and miss. Forecasting the weather on Thursday the 29th February 2052 is going to be a waste of time.

Forecasting is very much a case of being owned by the current state and quite possibly without our knowing it. It is likely to be based on social conditioning of where we are, what is reasonable, what is plausible and what is acceptable rather than what is actually the best place to be in the long term. The actions for the long run might be unpalatable to (currently) powerful or (not really) important stakeholders.

Backcasting clearly defines the preferred future: what it consists of, how it works, the rules and resources required. Don’t worry about whether it is practical. You are trying to see something that is completely different, completely fantastic, and completely the best place to be.

Backcasting then asks how we got there. This preferred future is based upon certain developments in thinking, technology, organisation and people. Each element is analysed in depth to find how it enabled this great state. Some of these elements are new to us and we direct our efforts to developing these necessary parts. Eventually we have the whole pyramid of pieces that make up our preferred future ... AND a way to build it.

Backcasting enables us, permits us by default, to start at the right / best / preferred future place and work on fulfilling that vision. We have a better chance of a better future with backcasting as a tool

A case study (hypothetical of course)

So how are we doing with varroa management.

How did we choose the target state? (if we have chosen at all?)

What is our vision of living with varroa, and how did we get to it?

Probably: We may be set to follow a vision defined by **Forecasting**. “When varroa arrives, this will happen, then we’ll have to do this and that, and then we’ll have to cope with the undesirable consequences of this and that, etc.” This will lead us down the overseas track, well-worn and muddy, of super discipline and chemical treatments to ensure the status quo is maintained. If there is anything left over, then perhaps we will get around to look at the “pie-in-the-sky” solution of assisted natural selection. The focus is only on staying alive before we consider long term options.

Question: Have the beekeepers lost control? Are we just in service to the treatment regime of regulation and expense?

In summary: We’ll fight varroa on behalf of the bees and maybe the bees will catch up one day.

It could we!: Our preferred future, our good place to be: Our bees manage varroa and we just keep managing the bees. This means we focus first on getting our bees in the right shape. Whether you call this extreme natural selection or fast track breeding, find the bees that do well and make sure we get their genes out and around massively and quickly: that is the job. **Backcasting** got us there.

We’ll still use chemicals to stay in business, but we won’t be (deliberately?) condemning ourselves to the endless fear of when the current chemical will be resisted and whether we will have a replacement chemical in time. So the focus here is the bees.

Why would we want to start with a crippled vision. Crippled by the easy norms of not the right time or not enough resources, it’ll never work or we’ve tried that before. Crippled by the belief that we can’t make big change because we haven’t asked the right people for permission. Crippled by the methods of solution development that are self limiting.

Another way of expressing this: in 30 years, will our next generation be saying “you mean we still haven’t properly started?”

Rob Kerr

Just thinking!

ABC News

Landline, Fri 30 August 2024

Bees 'starving' for pollen as native flowers fail to bloom

In the sandy hills of the Yanchep National Park, Anton Esterhuysen is on the hunt for flowers.

The native bushland on Western Australia's central coast would normally be bursting with springtime blooms but after four years of increasingly dry winters, only a handful of plants are starting to bud. Read the full story [here](#)

BBC - 5 September 2024

Beekeeper inspired by grandfather's long lost hives

When Ross Main tracked down the abandoned beehives his grandfather had kept in a disused quarry, he was surprised to find that the bees were still there. The fine art graduate now manages dozens of colonies and millions of bees across Fife – and they are all descended from his grandfather’s hive. Ross grew up in Dunbar and was often taken to the East Lothian quarry near Innerwick during his childhood. When he became a father for the first time in 2015, he was inspired to try and find the old hives. Read the full story [here](#)

Latest From Gwenyn Gruffydd

By John Kennedy

Irrepressible Welsh beekeeper Gwenyn Gruffydd continues to present informative videos.

His latest, available on line or from his website, is an hour long presentation of beekeeping practices employed in the UK by veteran (of 50 years) commercial beekeeper David Wainwright.

His Wainwright's Bee Farm runs 2500 hives across multiple sites in the UK, and thus qualifies as probably the largest of the craft there.

He is both a honey producer, and an importer and reseller of organic honey produced under Fair Trade conditions in Africa.

He has an informative website of his own available by searching, and his business (www.tropicalforest.com) has a staff complement of 25.

In Gruffydd's presentation David Wainwright comes over as a no-nonsense beekeeper, and discusses a number of interesting practices on making nucs, queen cell rearing, and his yields of honey achieved from multiple bee apiary sites in Wales and provincial UK, including in Shropshire and the Salisbury Plain, of around 50kg a

hive.

Wainwright notes on his website "from time to time on my travels I come across a beekeeper producing an interesting honey, for example French Lavender honey.

"These occasionally make a guest appearance under the Wainwright's Bee Farm label".

Wainwright's glass jarred honey is supplied to many supermarkets in the UK, including Marks & Spencer.

Bulk honey in a variety of formats is also sold to the food and cosmetic trades.

Since 1990 the company has also supplied organic African Beeswax from Cameroon, Ethiopia and Zambia, which is refined to the COSMOS standard, and common beeswax with both products complying with the latest European Pharmacopeia standard.

David Wainwright also has definite personal views on how frequently he inspects his hives, using queen cells, and raising nucs to supplement his producing hives, which makes his latest one hour long video presentation well worth watching.

He also notes that he has a retirement apiary to which he retires producing hives after about five seasons of honey production.

Do you have any spare copies of the Australian Bee Journal for April 2007?

We need them for the VAA journal archives.

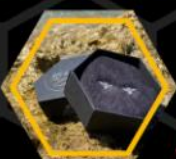
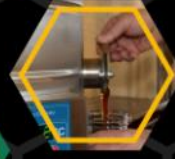
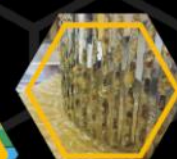
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New Research Project

In October 2024 Macquarie University begins a five-year project led by Dr Théotime Colin to discover the best methods to manage the varroa mite in Australia.

The project is possible thanks to a \$2.5 million dollar donation to Macquarie University from the Ian & Shirley Norman Foundation. The Foundation supports initiatives that align with its core pillars:

- Being ecologically sound;
- Protecting people from harm;
- Walking together with traditional custodians;
- and Empowering communities.

Tracy Norman, Founder & Chair of the Foundation, is herself a beekeeper and was required to destroy her hives in the Hunter Valley because of the varroa incursion. Her dedication to finding sustainable non-chemical solutions and supporting Australian beekeepers is inspired by this experience.

“It is hugely significant that the Ian & Shirley Norman Foundation has taken the lead in helping beekeepers address the varroa crisis” said Professor Andrew Barron, a researcher on the project. “I hope their generous action might inspire other philanthropists to help out,” he added.

The project will focus on non-chemical methods to control the varroa mite. Current treatments are primarily chemical based, affecting both bees and their products and leaving chemical residues inside beehives, potentially in honey and wax and impacting the bees. The five-year project aims to create non-chemical alternatives that work in Australia’s environments to give a wider range of control option to beekeepers. Dr Colin’s research team will focus on physical and mechanical control methods, consulting with beekeepers and peak industry bodies throughout the project to ensure solutions meet industry needs.

According to Professor Andrew Barron early studies indicate that Australia may not yet have the most serious viruses spread by the mite in other parts of the world. This means it will be easier to manage varroas for a while at least, which gives us a critical window of opportunity to develop effective management techniques.

“Our goal is to develop effective, non-chemical control methods that Australian beekeepers can use to manage this destructive parasite,” says Dr Colin. Proposed strategies include modifying hive environments, en-



Photo of a Varroa destructor mite on the floor of a honeybee hive (photo T. Colin).

hancing bee grooming behaviours, altering mite behaviour, and developing physical barriers to disrupt mite movement.

The mite reproduces on developing bees. Managing varroa in Australia could be tricky because in many areas hives have brood all year round, which means there is never a break in the mites’ reproductive cycle. The team is exploring how effective imposing a break in brood production on a beehive can be in reducing varroa mite populations in the

hive. “Artificial brood breaks are useful in managing varroa in some parts of the world, but we urgently need to know how effective it will be in Australia and how best to do it to minimise stress on the bees and the cost to beekeepers,” said Dr Colin.

The project team from the School of Natural Sciences includes Dr Cornelia Sattler, who will lead beekeeper consultations and field days, and Casey Forster, who will conduct field trials and efficacy assessments. Dr Ryan Warren from the University of Tasmania will test the treatments’ effects on bees in varroa-free environments and cooler climates. “Another vital outcome of the project will be a huge step up in research capacity for managing varroa in Australia,” said Dr Barron. Prototype testing will be conducted at Macquarie University’s Field Research Apiary, and promising methods will progress to field trials with beekeepers across various Australian environments.

The project will involve extensive collaboration with commercial and hobbyist beekeepers, industry bodies, and government agencies to ensure the developed methods are practical, affordable, and meet regulatory requirements. “It is vital that everything we develop is practical and affordable for beekeepers, so consultation is a vital part of the project,” said Dr Colin.

Joe Skuse, Board member of the Ian & Shirley Norman Foundation highlighted the foundation was “pleased to support this critical research that aims to safeguard Australia’s honeybee population and the vital pollination services they provide before it is too late”. For more information about the Ian & Shirley Norman Foundation and its mission, visit isnfoundation.org.au.

*Article written by Dr Theotime Colin,
Macquarie University*

From the AHBIC September 2024 Newsletter

BBC News, Fri 4 October 2024

A laboratory has been using bees to track how the environment is changing. Scientists at the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, use pollen DNA in the insects’ honey to measure the plant species present near hives across the south. From that, they can infer environmental conditions and track how conditions are changing. Read the full story [here](#)



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VAA Emails To Members

1st October 2024

Dear members,

We received the email message below from AHBIC as well as the included document. The email and letter provide context for a recommended 1 cent/kg increase in the honey levy. The levy is part of a cost-sharing program between our industry, pollination dependent industries and governments across Australia to respond to biosecurity events, to conduct research and development as well as national residue testing. If you are a levy payer and require more information or have questions, you are invited to contact AHBIC at ahbic@honeybee.org.au.

VAA Board

Hi Member bodies,

Attached is a letter to levy payers notifying of our intent to write to the Minister requesting a 1 cent/kg levy increase. We have presented this proposal to all state conferences and the final part of the formal process is to communicate our intentions to industry.

We have posted a link to the document on our social media, and I am emailing all member bodies. It is up to your committee if you want to communicate this further to your membership. Combined with the communications at the conferences, newsletters and member body meetings we will satisfy the department's requirement for industry notification.

In the coming weeks I will write to the Minister and the Department will then hold a 30-day objection period which we will communicate when we know the dates.

Danny Le Feuvre, CEO, AHBIC

Letter to industry re EPPR

AHBIC

19 September 2024

Re: Emergency Plant Pest Response Fund and Repaying The Commonwealth for the 2022 Varroa Response.

To the Australian Honey Bee Industry Levy Payers,

The Australian Honey Bee industry through AHBIC, is a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, a legally binding contract between our industry, pollination dependent industries and governments across Australia. This deed prescribes our responsibilities in cost sharing biosecurity responses where our industry is deemed an affected party. This cost shared responsibility is paid for through the Emergency Plant Pest Response (EPPR) fund collected on all domestically produced honey sold by beekeepers that sell more than 1,500kg per annum.

The Emergency Plant Pest Response (EPPR) Fund

Our industry established the honey levy in the 1960's and it has been regularly amended through industry consultation over time. Currently the levy is set at 4.6 cents/kg and is a statutory commonwealth levy that beekeepers must pay if they sell more than 1,500 kg per annum.

This levy contributes to programs including R&D, national residue testing and biosecurity that benefit all beekeepers. If you are not paying the levy and should be, please go to the DAFF honey levy website to contribute.

The EPPR component of the levy (2.7 cents/kg) is

held in the EPPR fund, managed by Plant Health Australia (PHA) and overseen by AHBIC. The EPPR fund is utilised to fund both the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBPS) and the National Bee Biosecurity Program (NBBP). The EPPR fund is also utilised when the repayment of any cost shared national biosecurity response is required. For example, the previous Asian Honey Bee biosecurity responses in Cairns and Townsville.

In these past examples the EPPR fund has had a sufficient balance to be able to pay our cost shared responsibilities without requiring any increase to the levy. However, repaying the 2022 National Varroa Biosecurity Response and Transition to Management will require a levy increase.

National Varroa Destructor Biosecurity Response

The honey bee industry proportion of the 2022 National Varroa Response has an upper limit set at \$1.1 million for our share. In February 2024 the AHBIC member bodies agreed to increase the EPPR levy by 1 cent per kilogram to repay the industries share of the 2022 response debt over the next 6-7 years (timeframe dependant on annual national honey sales). This is based on the long term average production of 20,000 tonnes of levied honey nationally. The AHBIC member bodies also agreed that this levy should be removed once the full amount of the agreed \$1.1million debt is repaid.

AHBIC has communicated the proposed levy increase over the last 6 months through state conferences and various AHBIC communications, including member bodies meetings where feedback was collected and noted. This letter is to inform the honey bee industry of AHBIC's intention to write to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, to request that our EPPR levy on honey be increased by 1cent per kilogram from 2.7c/kg to 3.7c/kg.

The process for increasing the EPPR levy

There is a prescribed process for enacting a EPPR levy increase which can be found on the DAFF website (Levy Guidelines). The levy guidelines require AHBIC to notify industry of proposed changes, write to the responsible Minister requesting the amendments, who will then allow a 30 day objection period.

Following the objection period the Minister will decide whether to allow the EPPR increase, and industry will be notified.

Reviewing and Redesigning the Honey Levy

The AHBIC member bodies have also requested that AHBIC review the current honey levy structure to ensure it is fit for purpose. AHBIC has established a levies subcommittee to review and provide considered recommendations to the AHBIC board of any identified potential amendments.

The AHBIC levy subcommittee will specifically undertake work to;

- Review the overall funds collected, future costs and forecast revenue to ensure the current and future programs are sustainable.

- Identify levy "leakage" and provide recommendations on ways to minimise "leakage".

(Continued on page 31)

VAA Emails To Members, cont'd

(Continued from page 30)

- Investigate the producer 1,500kg threshold – identify if this needs to be amended to capture a greater proportion of the honey produced across industry. The review will consider the cost of levy collection and how that impacts the threshold.

- Other Levies – determine if other levies, such as a pollination levy and/or others, could be implemented to increase fairness across the industry and how will it be collected.

- Marketing levy – review the viability of a marketing levy for our industry

- Review the re-instating of the Queen Bee levy

Initiation of the 1 cent EPPR levy increase

The member body representatives and the AHBIC board have decided to initially proceed with the EPPR levy increase whilst empowering the subcommittee to methodically review the current levies. This will allow enough time for the subcommittee to provide considered recommendations to the AHBIC board for consideration.

If you, as a levy payer, require any further information, clarification or have any questions please reach out to AHBIC via email; ahbic@honeybee.org.au

Yours sincerely,

Danny Le Feuvre

Chief Executive Officer

27th September

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of Edna Callaway's passing in the early hours of Thursday 26 September 2024. After a working life dedicated to the beekeeping industry, among many other interests and organisations, she peacefully passed away, leaving behind a legacy in the work she so passionately devoted herself to.

Our sincere condolences to Lindsay and the Callaway family.

17th September 2024

The next Varroa National Transition to Management Webinar is planned for Tuesday evening, 17th September. The proposed agenda includes:

- Critical importance of monitoring levels
- Determining the right monitoring frequency
- Sample selection - how many hives in an apiary? Why 300 bees in a sample?
- Calculating mite loads from a sample
- Common monitoring mistakes and how to avoid them

For those who can't attend, a recording will be posted shortly after the webinar at [AHBIC's YouTube channel](#). You can also view previous webinar recordings there.

7th September 2024

Members of our Association have contacted us regarding issues related to colony health and bee deaths after this year's almond pollination. We wanted to alert our members to this situation and to ensure that beekeepers in the region remain aware and vigilant in monitoring the condition of your hives.

The circumstances surrounding the reports have not been investigated at this stage. The evidence experienced by beekeepers includes:

- large numbers of dead bees inside the hives and at the hive's entrance;
- hatching bees dying as they emerge from their cells;
- dead bees with protruding tongues.

If you suspect an adverse health event with your colonies you may need to conduct residue testing to try and determine the source of the problem. Agriculture Victoria has an [informative webpage](#) that explains how to sample bees for residue testing. Obtaining samples as soon as possible after a problem is detected will ensure that the test results provide substantive diagnostic data to assist beekeepers, growers and government officials to protect our bees and our beekeepers in the future.

If you experience similar or other issues related to bee health please contact the VAA at vaa@vicbeekeepers.com.au. You should also communicate any issues with your broker or grower as well as with Agriculture Victoria at telephone 136 186 or email at honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

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Agriculture Victoria: Apiary team
Website: [Honey bees | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria](http://Honey%20bees%20Livestock%20and%20animals%20Agriculture%20Victoria)
Website:
www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/honey-bees
To report a suspect exotic please call: Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881
For enquiries and endemic disease notification please use:
Ph: 136 186
Email honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au
The Varroa project team can also be contacted at the above email.

For enquiries related to permits and movement restrictions:
Email honeybee.permits@agriculture.vic.gov.au
For beekeeper registration please log onto BeeMAX
www.bees.agriculture.vic.gov.au
or call the Bee Registration Helpline 1800 356 761

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If you can't reach an Officer and need to talk to someone urgently, please call the Customer Service Centre: Ph: 136 186

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VFF State Beekeeping Branch:
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Mob: 0408 592 091

Collingwood Childrens' Farm Apiary Open 10.30-3.30
2nd & 4th Sunday of month.
collingwoodbees@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/collingwoodbees

The Australian Bee Journal welcomes contributions for inclusion in the journal. Please send your original photos, articles, handy hints, anecdotes, club activities etc to abjeditors@yahoo.com

Contacts

VAA Inc Regional Groups

Bendigo Branch:

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bbvaasecretary@gmail.com
 Chair: Jamie Trimby
bbvaachair@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Carol Maunder
bbvaatreasurer@gmail.com
 General Information Q&A
 Meetings - 1st Wed. each month
 (except Jan & Dec)
 Dinner at 6.00pm (optional)
 Meeting at 7.00 pm.
 Lakeside Hotel, Bendigo.
 Executive Committee Meeting:
 3rd Wed month as required.
 Venue: As notified.
 Please register to attend all
 Meetings

Melbourne Section:

Chair: A/Prof James Doery
 Deputy Chairperson: Mike Love
 Secretary, Rob Kerr
 Ph: 0421 078 387
 Treasurer: Janet Conos
vaamelbournesec-tion@hotmail.com
www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/Melbourne-Section
 Information/ Education Meetings:
 from 7:30 pm the last Thursday
 of each month except December
 Location: Church of Christ,
 1 The Avenue, Surry Hills.

Sunraysia Branch:

Naomi Forbes-Wilson
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billabonghoney@yahoo.com

VAA Inc. Library Trust

Secretary: Russell Goodman,
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North Eastern Apiarists' Association Inc. (NEAA Inc.):

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secretary.neaa@gmail.com

"J" Beekeeping Club Inc.

35 Duncan's Lane, Diggers Rest
 Meet on the 2nd Wednesday each
 month at 7pm

Southside Beekeepers Club:

Secretary: Ted Cottle
 Ph: 0428 429 547
ted@southsidebeekeepers.com.au
 7.30pm on the 4th Wed each
 month at Monterey Secondary
 College,
 21 Silvertop St, Frankston North

Geelong Beekeepers Club

Pres: Stephen Fridey
 Ph: 0401 897 579
info@geelongbeekeepersclub.org.au
 Meetings third Friday of the
 month at Belmont Masonic
 Centre,
 25 Regent Street, Belmont

Latrobe Valley

Beekeepers Assoc.

President: Sean-Paul Smith
LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com
 Meets 7-9pm first Tuesday each
 month, Old Moe Netball Courts,
 99 Savages Rd. Moe
 P.O. Box 323 Newborough 3825
 Mob: 0466 041 199

Woodend Bee-Friendly Society

An action group of the Macedon
 Ranges Sustainability Group
 E: wbfbs@mrsq.org.au

South Gippsland Beekeepers

Inc. Secretary: Anna Jones
 Mob: 0411 770 062
secretary@sgbeekeepers.org.au
 Web: <http://www.southgippslandbeekeepers.org.au/>
 Meetings: second Thursday of
 the month at St Peters Anglican
 Church Hall, Cnr McCartin St. &
 Bruce St., Leongatha

Melbourne Beekeepers Club Inc:

Web: melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au
 E: secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au

Northwestern Bee Club Inc.

President: Roger Mitchell
 Mob. 0407 427 431
northwesternbeeclub@gmail.com
 Web: <https://www.nwbee.club/>

Mornington Peninsula

Beekeepers Association :

P.O. Box 186, Mornington, 3931
 Ph: 0401 965 558
 E: admin@mpba.org.au
 Monthly MPBA Club Meeting -
 4th Wednesday of every month
 at 7pm Mornington Park Pavilion,
 9 Flinders Drive, Mornington

Moonee Valley Beekeepers Club Inc. (MVBC Inc.)

Secretary: Paul Kucera
mvbeekeepersclub@gmail.com
 Meets at 7pm every 2nd Tuesday
 of the month at Maribyrnong Park
 Bowls Club, 195 Holmes Rd,
 Moonee Ponds, VIC 3039

WerriBeeks Inc.

President: Carmel Gerdson
 Secretary: Helen Morland
 Treasurer: Debbie Conway
 E: werribeeks@gmail.com



John van Weeghel

Do you have photos of bee or honey related subjects?
 The Australian Bee Journal would love some of your photos for
 use in the journal and on the VAA website.
 Please send to abjeditors@yahoo.com

CLASSIFIEDS

HONEY BUYERS

Archibald's Honey Co.
Spring Rd.
Dingley,
VIC, 3172
Ph: 03 9551 1860
Contact: Stuart Archibald
Email: rosalie@archibaldhoney.com.au

Beechworth Honey Ltd.
38-40 Hammersley Rd.
Corowa,
NSW 2646
Ph: 02 6033 2322
Contact: Steve or
Jodie Goldsworthy

Beeman Honey & Beekeeping Supplies
2/14-16 Tova Dr.
Carrum Downs
Vic 3201
Ph: 0438 7465 01
Contact Moe Jarrad
majarrad@gmail.com
Beemanhoney.com.au

Capilano Honey Ltd
Capilano St.
Maryborough,
VIC 3465
Ph: 07 3712 8224
0419 431 652
Contact: Stephen Covey

Goode's Honey
Lot 1, 75 Bosworth Rd
Bairnsdale,
VIC 3875
Ph: 03 5152 2180
Contact: Terry Goode

Honey Buyers Group
Martin Drake,
Bendigo or
Melbourne
0409 808 332

Redpath's Beekeeping Supplies
193 Como Parade East,
Parkdale,
VIC 3195
Ph: 03 9587 5950
Alan Redpath
redpaths@redpaths.com.au
www.redpaths.com.au

FOR SALE

Business for sale
Jeeralang Apiary Supplies
Koala Drive, Jeeralang Junction
Ph: 03 5122 2641
Servicing Gippsland and
Eastern Victoria

8 & 10 frame tin lids
New & recycled tin
KAS MANUFACTURING
Ph: 03 5449 6680
Mob: 0409 017 311

VAA members are reminded that
they are entitled to one **FREE**
6-line classified ad each year.

NEW MEMBERS

Tobin Assisi
Mark Bichan
Felicity Cripps
Joanne Daniel
Adam Staples
Lisa Stockheim
Colin Walker
Shaun Wynne

CONDOLENCES

To the family of
Edna June Callaway
who passed away peacefully
on September 26, 2024.
Aged 87 years

The Australian Bee Journal
welcomes contributions and
photos from readers and
members. Please send any
letters, articles or photos to
abjeditors@yahoo.com

Classified ads \$2.20 per line.
VAA members are reminded
that they are entitled to one
FREE
6-line classified ad each year.
abjeditors@yahoo.com
Members Notices (births,
deaths etc) are always free.

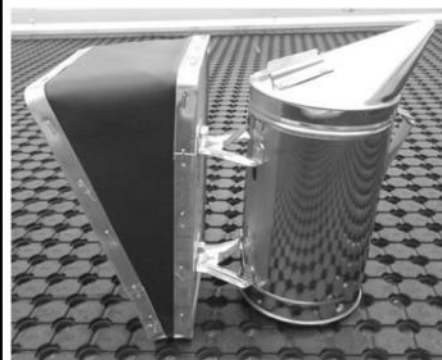
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**SEASONS
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**Classies can be
accepted up until 1/12/2024**



**SEASONS
GREETINGS**
in this size ad
= \$70



Contact the Editor at
abjeditors@yahoo.com
by **15/11/2024**
to be part of the
December 2024
Seasonal Greetings
Promotion



**WHY NOT OFFER SOME FUN,
FRIENDLY, FEEL GOOD, FESTIVE OR
TRADIONAL SEASONS GREETINGS
TO YOUR FRIENDS, CUSTOMERS
CLUB MEMBERS OR
FELLOW BEEKEEPERS?**

**We are offering special prices on
these ad sizes in the December journal
for seasonal greetings.**

This size = \$200

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