



# THE BEEKEEPER

Volume 26 Issue 3 July 2014

Quarterly Newsletter. Established 1954

The North Shore Beekeepers Association (NSW) Inc.

## ***WHAT'S THE BUZZ?***

Scientists rear sniffer bees to locate mines in floodswept Balkans.

Biologists in France and Croatia have successfully reared sniffer bees, which they claim could find explosives that are hidden underground in the Balkans.

The insects are said to have an olfactory sense as strong as that of sniffer dogs. Researchers hope they will speed up the urgent task of clearing thousands of landmines that have been disturbed in the worst flooding on record. About one million landmines were planted during the war in Bosnia in 1992-1995. Nearly 120,000 of the unexploded devices remain in more than 9400 minefields. The bad weather has dislodged many of the mines.

"We knew that bees were sensitive to certain smells, like geraniums or nerol. The challenge was to get them to learn to spot TNT" said Yves Le Conte, director of the bee and environment unit at INRA, in Avignon.

In experiments, Mr Le Conte hid TNT under sand covered with sugar syrup to attract the bees. This encouraged the insects to prefer pots with TNT in them.

The bees soon lose interest when they realize there is no sugar to be found, so have to be "re-educated" with sugar-coated TNT roughly every half an hour, Mr Le Conte said.

Article from The Sun Herald May 25, 2014 first published in Telegraph, London.

And the Americans are taking Bee Health seriously. On June 20, the White House issued a Presidential Memorandum creating a Pollinator Health Task Force and ordering the Environmental Protection Agency to "access the effects of pesticides, including neonicotinoids, on bee and other pollinator health and take action, as appropriate."

We'd be happy for Mr Abbott to extend funding the Asian Honey Bee eradication program in North Queensland.

**Bee Garden Field Days 11am**

**Sunday 17th August  
Sunday 14th September**

# From the Editor

Caroline Jago



Winter is certainly here and it's a good time to paint your hive boxes, clean out smokers, and do other general housekeeping jobs.

We extracted honey a month ago and it has gone to a beautiful white fudge in record time. Too early to start whipping it for next year's Easter Show!  
Stay warm...

# From the President

Phil Kavanagh

I've been away in Victoria during the first half of July and during that time, I delivered a new bee hive to my grand children who are now, after a long wait, official beekeepers. If you think it's cold for the bees in Sydney, have some sympathy for those in the highlands of Victoria. To ease the dramatic change in climate, I insulated the hive boxes with 30mm closed cell foam and this will stay on until the weather warms up in late spring. I was surprised to see flowering plants and it was comforting to see lots of pollen being brought back to the hive when the sun was out.

But that's no way for a president to report, so here is some club news. The committee has bought a transportable building, 9.6 metres by 6 metres and this will be placed on the land at Terrey Hills, along with the club hives as soon as our Development Application is approved. We are now awaiting a pre-DA meeting with council and then the DA will be lodged. There is no firm timeline to rely on, but at least we are now moving forward to a definite club house in the near (ish) future.

Please have a look at the "Coming Events" page on the web site and decide which outdoor sales event you can attend to assist the club to make enough money to continue to function as well as it always does. Just a couple of hours is good and you never know it could be fun. Looking forward to seeing you all at one or the other.

Phil Kavanagh



Phil pictured with Arki. (Of Arki's Funny Honey fame)



“Under The Lid” is a new section where each newsletter we’ll briefly look at what is going on in our hives and what we should be preparing for.

### AUGUST

If you have not started making up frames, this can be done now. Wiring boards are available to financial members. Do not put foundation in until September. Check again stored frames for wax moth.

Check hives. If winter has been cold and wet they may need syrup.

Keeping records/notes/a diary of your activities with the bees can be very helpful to refer to as times goes on. If you move your bees it is now law under the Apiaries Act 1985 to note the date and place bees are moved to. Are all your brood chambers branded with your registration number?

### SEPTEMBER

All boxes, lids, bottom boards should be painted. Frames can be assembled, wired and embedded.

Check hives for: Disease, brood pattern, honey and pollen. Is there enough space for expansion within the hive, remove excess honey leaving enough for brood rearing. As a guide – for each frame of brood there should be a frame of honey.

### OCTOBER

Check hives for space, do you need an extra super? You should always have a spare box with frames ready for a flow. Honey flows vary with the area you live in and the weather conditions. Get to know your local flora, once you have bees its hard not to be looking up in the trees to see what is in flower.

## KEEPERS STUNG BY HIVE THEFT

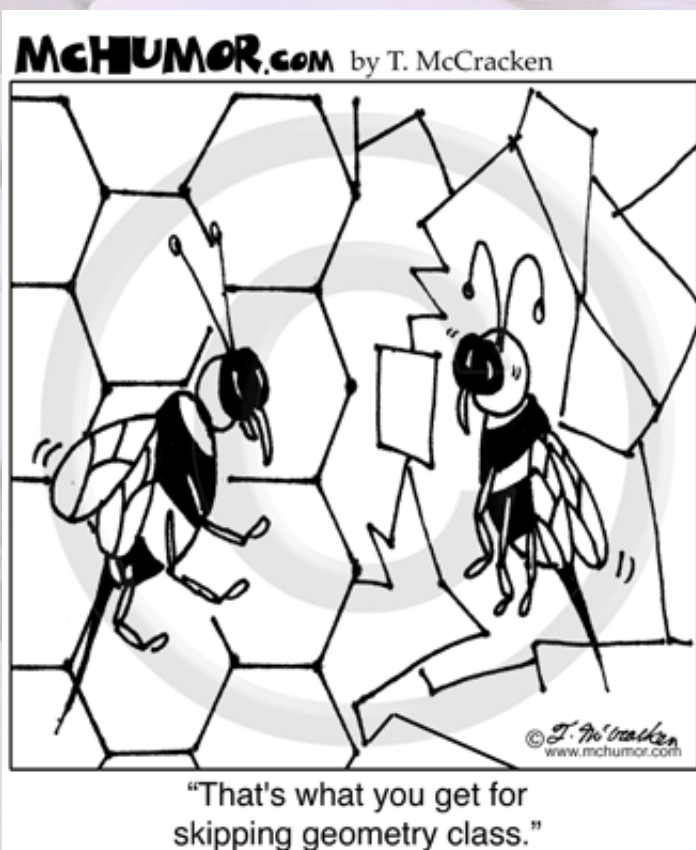
1 May SMH

A Queensland beekeepers club has become the latest to be stung by hive hustlers keen to capitalise on increasing honey prices. Not even the threat of 240,000 bees put off the sticky handed bandits who reportedly stole 12 hives containing more than 480 kilograms of honey, with the haul netting potentially \$2,000 as wholesale prices reach \$4 a kilo. The alleged theft has devastated the Ipswich and Moreton Beekeepers’ Association.

The North Shore Beekeepers Association share our newsletters with the Queensland group and vice a versa so our heartfelt condolences go out to them. We know how hard they work for their club, and how much time and love goes into bee-keeping.

## WANTED!

Looking to rent an area to place 1 or 2 hives  
Please call Den 9972 3503.



# **MORE SKULLDUGGERY!**

## ***Honey Lovers stung by a flood of cheap imports made from corn syrup*** ***June 16, SMH***

Breakfast lovers, don't get stung reaching for that local honey to spread on your toast. It might not be Australian and it might not come from bees.

The consumer watchdog is preparing to act on some brands of cheap imported honey, which the bee industry claims do not meet local food standards and could be deceptively labelled.

Victoria Honey, imported from Turkey, is one of four products identified by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council as potentially breaching labelling laws, amid claims it is not made from honey.

The cheap, one kilogram honey tubs have been found in fruit shops around the country and are part of a sticky flood of similar products competing with local producers.

According to the industry, more than 200 tonnes of allegedly substandard honey have been imported since complaints were first lodged a couple of years ago.

Tests have been sent to Germany for analysis, and the industry says the results show the products do not contain honey and are most likely corn syrup. The industry has also told the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that imported products with names like "Victoria Honey" are misleading because consumers might think they come from Australia. They identified another imported honey being sold with a map of Australia on its logo.

An ACCC official said in a Senate hearing last week that the watchdog was preparing to act on the complaints and would make an announcement within weeks. Fairfax Media contacted the local distributor of Victoria Honey but did not receive a response.

Australia Honey Bee industry Council executive director Trevor Weatherhead became aware of the problem after noticing honey being imported prepackaged for nearly half the cost local farmers were getting.

He said the low price of cheap imported honey was a problem, as was the potential for a "funny taste" to turn off consumers.

"If someone buys that and then doesn't like the flavour they might not buy any more" he said.

Politicians have called for action to reform Australia's food labelling laws. Independent senator Nick Xenophon said consumers were being conned and Australian honey producers robbed of a fair deal.

"The penalties should be much more severe" he said. "There should be a warning for importers of products."

Nationals senator John Williams said he was sick of a lack of action on food labelling, particularly as the honey industry struggled with drought and bushfires affecting production.

"This is just crazy," he said. "The honey industry is already doing it tough, we've got to help them and do what we can for them."



The African Honey Bee ( *Apis Mellifera Scutellata* ) which is native to Central and Southern Africa. is spreading through America where they are commonly know as “Killer Bees”

WICHITA FALLS, Texas July 27— A North Texas street department worker has been stung about 1,000 times by aggressive bees that also attacked two co-workers who tried to help him. Wichita Falls officials blamed Thursday’s attack on Africanized honey bees. Spokesman Barry Levy says a swarm attacked a worker mowing grass along culverts near the Weeks Park Tennis Center. He says the man was in good condition at a local hospital. Levy says two co-workers also were stung when they came to the man’s aid. One worker fled into a nearby tennis center, bringing the swarm with him.



While we can happily report that the man above survived the attack, not all people who encounter these bees are so lucky. The Bees are very protective of their hives and brood. The US Department of Agriculture suggests that their “home turf” is 91 metres square. in Texas last year a 62 year old man died as a result of 3,000 stings after being pursued by an estimated 40,000 Africanised Bees.

## ***HONEY LEVY DOUBLES TO BOOST BIOSECURITY***

Australian apiarists have voted to double the rate of a levy paid to fund industry programs. The result of a levy poll was declared at the annual meeting of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC).

Tasmanian Beekeepers Association president Lindsay Bourke supports a doubling of the levy. Beekeepers have agreed to pay an extra 2.3 cents for every kilo of honey sold, to boost biosecurity programs.

President of the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association Lindsay Bourke says the industry expects that will amount to an additional \$400,000 dollars a year from the industry, and it will garner additional government funds.

“Yes it will go up to 4.6 cents for every kilogram of honey.

“And the 2.3 cents increase will go entirely into biosecurity, along with the money that already went in. “So that’s a big increase from us.” Mr Bourke says while 86 per cent of the votes were for doubling the levy, the total number of votes was low.

He says the funds will be used to expand pest and disease surveillance as well as the industry’s emergency contingency fund.

“We’ve got to increase the sentinel hive program,” he says.

“The unmanned program that we’ve got, we put hives all around the ports with camera recognition in them and (pictures) are sent back to a base.

“So we’ve got to expand that to cover all of the ports, so we’ve got lots of things to spend it on.

“Also the horrible old things we’ve had for nearly 200 years.

“The disease American foul brood is pretty bad in some of the mainland states, and we need a bit of money to counteract that.”

The AHBIC meeting also saw members vote to disband the peak body, Federal Council of Australian Apiarists Association, because it had become redundant.

# **BEEHIVE FENCE DETERS ELEPHANTS**

Here's an interesting story from Nigeria.

A simple but effective deterrent...that won the 2013 St Andrews prize for the environment and Future For Nature Award. This is from the [Bestnigrianforum.com/blog](http://Bestnigrianforum.com/blog). More can be read at [elephantsandbees.com/bee-hive-fence](http://elephantsandbees.com/bee-hive-fence). You can even download a manual and build your own!

A simple fence made from wood, wire and beehives can deter elephants from raiding farmers' crops. A pilot study in Kenya has shown that such fences reduce the number of raids by elephants by almost half.

The work is the culmination of previous research which showed elephants are naturally scared of African honey bees.

A much larger trial is now underway in the hope the fences will provide an elegant solution to years of conflict between elephants and farmers.

In Kenya, elephants are not confined to National Parks or Reserves. As they roam, they often come across increasing numbers of farms created by pastoralists who are being encouraged to settle down and grow crops.

The elephants break into the farms and raid them for food such as ripe tomatoes, potatoes and maize.

That causes significant economic damage and conflict with farmers who occasionally resort to shooting, spearing or poisoning elephants to protect their livelihoods and families.

So researchers from the University of Oxford, UK worked with the charity Save the Elephants to conduct a pilot study of a novel 'bee-hive fence'.

The design is based around the idea that elephants are wary of honey bees in the wild. In 2002, University of Oxford zoologist Fritz Vollrath discovered that elephants avoided trees with beehives in.

Colleague Lucy King followed this idea up by showing that elephants would quickly move on even if they heard the sound of a buzzing hive.



Now a team led by King, including Vollrath, has taken the idea to its logical conclusion – the creation of a fence containing beehives. In the Ex-Erok community in the southern region of Laikipia, Kenya, the team recruited farmers whose crops were regularly raided by elephants.

Around the side of one farm, nine traditional log beehives were hung under small thatched roofs, with each being linked by wire. In all, the fence continued for 90m with each hive 10m apart. The hives were left empty.

Another similar-sized control farm nearby was left unfenced. The farmers then recorded how many elephants raided their crops and how often. “The fence deterred a significant portion of elephants,” King told Earth News, speaking from her tent in the Kenyan bush.

In all, elephants raided the protected farm on seven occasions, compared to 13 raids on the unfenced farm. Just 38 individual elephants reached the protected fields, compared to 95 feeding in those not protected, the team reports in the African Journal of Ecology.

“Even with empty hives, the beehive fence is a swinging, moving complex shape which provides a visual barrier to approaching elephants. But from our other work in Kenya we have learnt that elephants avoid feeding on trees with beehives in and they run away from bee sounds,” says King.

“So we expect elephants recognise the shape and smell of beehives and will avoid them in case they disturb the bees. Occupied hives will have even more success in deterring elephants and also provide honey for the villagers.”

Indeed, the pilot was so successful that the farmers involved ended up extending the fence at their own cost and initiative. A severe year-long drought in the region has hampered the team’s efforts to conduct a much wider trial of the fence, using a different hive design that should produce more honey.

That is underway across 60 farms, with funds provided by the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, Safaricom Foundation and Save the Elephants.

“We have built 1700 meters of beehive fences which we are monitoring for hive occupations and elephant movements,” says King.

“We are having good success with hive occupations but the drought has caused the experiment to go on hold until the next rainy season in November when the community will try to plant once more.”

As to why the elephants are so scared of bees?

The bees aren’t likely to be able to sting through an elephant’s thick hide. But they can and do sting elephants around the eyes and inside the trunk. It seems that this only has to happen once for an elephant never to forget the experience.



## Swarm Collectors

Want to be a swarm collector? You just need to be registered on the web site then you will receive calls from the public.

The list is open to all financial members  
Phone Phil Kavanagh on  
0402 232014 or 9482 3836

## Honey Wanted

As always, the club needs further supplies of honey for outdoor sales. If you know of anyone who can help us out, please contact  
Joan Stebbing Phone: 9489 6476.

*A warm welcome to our new members!*

We hope to see you at our field days and our Wednesday night talks.

There are lots of opportunities to meet other members at the upcoming outdoor sales events during the months of August and September.

Come one come all!

## HONEY LEMON CAKE

For those of you who like to cook, here's a delicious cake recipe we often make at home in our Beehive cake tin. Enjoy!

USE 10 CUP CAKE TIN.

2  $\frac{3}{4}$  CUPS OF FLOUR  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  TABLESPOONS OF BAKING POWDER  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  TABLESPOON SALT  
1 CUP OF BUTTER SOFTENED  
1  $\frac{1}{4}$  CUPS OF SUGAR  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  CUP OF HONEY  
4 EGGS  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  TABLESPOON OF VANILLA  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  CUP OF MILK  
2 TABLESPOONS OF LEMON JUICE



HEAT OVEN TO 300 DEGREES. GREASE AND FLOUR PAN AND SET ASIDE.

IN MEDIUM BOWL SIFT TOGETHER FLOUR, BAKING POWDER AND SALT AND SET ASIDE.

IN A LARGE BOWL BEAT TOGETHER BUTTER, SUGAR AND HONEY, SCRAPING BOWL OFTEN.

ADD EGGS ONE AT A TIME, BLENDING WELL AFTER EACH ADDITION. STIR IN VANILLA.

REDUCE SPEED TO LOW AND GRADUALLY ADD FLOUR MIXTURE, ALTERNATING WITH MILK, MIXING JUST UNTIL BLENDED.

BLEND IN LEMON JUICE.

BAKE AT 300 DEGREES FOR 50-60 MINUTES, UNTIL TOOTHPICK INSERTED COMES OUT CLEAN.

COOL FOR 15 MINUTES IN PAN.

INVERT ONTO COOLING RACK.



# WORKER BEE OF THE WEEK

## JOAN STEBBING



In this edition I talk to Joan about her involvement in all things to do with honey, our club and of course candles. Most members would have met Joan as she is a very friendly and welcoming face at our Bee Club. Joan has handled our outdoor honey sales since 1995. Joan is pictured with Alexander.

### **How did you become involved with bees?**

I was living in Melbourne in 1970 when a swarm flew into the garden. My mother said that Grandfather kept bees. I became fascinated with them and decided to keep them. I don't remember how I got all the equipment but there was a local man who taught beekeeping, so I went along to the classes. The man running it was Don Langridge, he wrote books on bees and worked for the Department of Agriculture in Victoria. Even back then he was aware and worried about American foulbrood coming to Australia.

### **How long have you been a member of the club?**

I joined in 1990.

### **How did you find out about the club.**

In 1983 I moved to Sydney and had to leave the bees behind. Another swarm came and I started them up again with Wal, (Joan's partner). There was an article in the North Shore Times asking people to come and join the club. We had 4 hives in Wahroonga and won prizes at the Easter show for candles, honey and wax. Once we won Best Small Producers section.

### **What other positions have you had apart from outside sales?**

Secretary for a while and equipment sales with Wal.

### **What do you enjoy most about being a member of the Bee Club?**

I like meeting and talking to people and there is always something to learn about bees.

### **Why don't you keep bees now?**

Our bees were wiped out by hive beetle in 2002. I still love going to the club because I'm still interested in bees.

### **How do you clean cappings?**

I melt the wax with a solar melter and then strain it through a nylon stocking. I keep warming the wax and strain it two or three times. I don't like adding it to water, its too messy. I keep the wax in 1-2 kilo blocks and melt them as needed. I would have worked with at least a 100 kilos of wax!

## Meetings, Events & Activities

### NSBKA Meetings

7.30pm start for 8pm meeting

We meet on the second Wednesday of every second month at the Senior Citizen's Hall, 259 Pacific Highway, Lindfield. Library operates from 7.30pm to 8pm

### Sunday Field days at a Beegarden 11am - 1pm

Field days are on the Sunday following the second Wednesday of each month, at a Bee Garden which will be advised by looking at the website.

A sausage sizzle is provided from 12 noon.

## August

Wed 13 Lindfield Meeting

**Guest Speaker Doug Somerville**

Sun 17 Field Day 10 Marina Close Mt Kuring-Gai

Preparing for swarm season

11am - 1pm

## September

Sun 14 Field Day

24 Tepko Rd , Terrey Hills .

More about swarming

11am - 1pm

## COMMITTEE 2014-2015

President	Phil Kavanagh	9482 3836
Vice President	Keith Pester	9938 4694
Treasurer	Ted Romer	9450 0244
Secretary	Peter Marvell	9440 2265
Membership	Ian Savins	9449 5296
Apiary Officer	Greg Deakin	0410 742 953
Public Officer	Ian Savins	9449 5296
Equipment Officer	Jim Toliopoulos	9727 4584
Ass. Equipment Officer	Michael Vordis	9569 1775
Librarian	Roger Murphy	0438 617 308
Newsletter Editor	Caroline Jago	0416017542
Outside Sales Co-ordinator	Joan Stebbing	9489 6476

## EXTRACTORS AND EQUIPMENT FOR FINANCIAL MEMBERS USE

Greg Deakin (Terrey Hills)	0410 742 953
Roger Murphy (extractor) Hornsby Heights	0438617 308
Ian Savins (wiring boards) (St Ives)	9449 5296
Keith Pester (Freshwater)	9938 4694

## SWARM REMOVAL

The Association collects swarms free of charge for residents of Ku-ring-gai. Contact these people if you know of anyone in need of swarm removal, call Greg Deakin, Peter Marvell, Phil Kavanagh or join the swarm list on the web site and enjoy this activity yourself.

## Volunteering

### August

Sunday 31 St Ives Wildflower Garden

Outdoor sales event

### September

Saturday 6 Willoughby Fair

Outdoor sales event

Sunday 28 Cumberland State Forest

Outdoor sales event

Proceeds will go towards rebuilding our club

Please call Joan Stebbing 9489 6476



[www.nsbka.org.au](http://www.nsbka.org.au)



[club@nsbka.org.au](mailto:club@nsbka.org.au)



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