

Colonel Guy Pulling. The Amateur Beekeepers' Association.

The Amateur Beekeepers' Association (ABA) was formed at a public meeting on 3rd December 1954. The meeting was held in the Supper Room of the Masonic Hall, Lindfield. It was called by way of a letter from Colonel Gut Pulling addressed to all known beekeepers in the Metropolitan Area of Sydney.

Mr Alan Crook chaired the meeting attended by 41 amateur beekeepers. The principal speakers were the convenor Guy Pulling of Turramurra, and Alan Clemson of the Department of Agriculture, who also showed slides.

Pulling gave a brief outline of the events leading up to the decision to call the meeting. He then proposed that an association be formed and that it be called The Amateur Beekeepers' Association of NSW. The motion was seconded by J Caffin and was carried unanimously. The inaugural meeting decided to meet nine days later at Col Pulling's home at 8 Cherry Street Turramurra for an apiary demonstration. The Association was an immediate success and drew on the large audience of amateur beekeepers living in and around the metropolitan area. Pulling was the driving force in the early days. He possessed the organisational skills and quiet dignity necessary to unite the members in a search for beekeeping knowledge.

The first Annual Meeting of the Association was held on 22nd March 1955 in the Co-op Hall, 39A Willoughby Road, Crows Nest.

The constitution drafted by the Provisional Committee was accepted with minor alterations and the President, Col. Pulling and Provisional Committee were elected for the ensuing year. Within a month of its formation the Association had over members (throughout this account of the ABA membership seem to come in 40s).

The fees agreed were Entrance fee 10/- (10 shillings) and Annual Subscription of one pound. Field Days were held from March to May and August to December in the first year, whilst evening meetings were held each month.

The Association was a success from the start and it was only a matter of time before members travelling long distances to attend meetings and field days began forming local branches. Details of branches and their formation may be found in Appendix iii.

The ABA newsletter, The Amateur Beekeeper (known among members as The Yellow Peril because of its colour) is intended primarily as a notice board for branch events, but it has always managed to be more than that. Editors of the newsletter, and particularly the late Milton Parry, unearthed and published obscure facets of apiculture as well as keeping members abreast of industry and scientific developments.

Colonel Pulling Competition. Pulling Award.

A feature of the ABA is an inter-branch competition for the Colonel Pulling Award. Bob Perkins wrote a piece about it in the October/November 2002 issue of The Amateur Beekeeper in which he reminded members that the award was initiated by the ABA Council in 1986, under the presidency of Brother Paul Schulz, to commemorate the life of the Association founder, Guy Pulling. The award takes the form of an honour board that is held for a year by the winning branch. The independent judge/s consider a range of categories including education, innovation, housekeeping (apiary), displaying of apiary products and a quiz.

The first competition was held in conjunction with the AGM of the ABA at the Horticultural Research Station at Narara on the NSW Central Coast in April 1988 and hosted by the Central Coast Branch. The judge was Bruce White and the Central Coast Branch won the Award with the highest number of points, thus being the first Branch to have its name inscribed on the new Board.

Colonel Guy Harris Pulling died in Orange on August 18th 1971 at the age of 75 years.

He was educated at Sydney Church of England Grammar School, North Sydney, where he was distinguished as an oarsman and on leaving school he was engaged in surveying in central Queensland.

On the outbreak of World War 1 he joined the AIF and saw active service on Gallipoli and in France and was seriously wounded.

After the war he joined the Indian Army in the 6th Gurkha Rifles where he spent most of his army career, finally commanding his regiment and subsequently in other duties as Brigadier. On his retirement in 1949 he and Mrs Pulling returned to Australia and made their home at Turrumurra where he became interested in beekeeping and attended the Apiary Summer School at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College.

Part of obituary by Murray Charlton. ABK September 1971.

Source: Fred Benecke, Honey Business, Book.

By W. F. Hammond 26th January 2022