



Stockport Beekeeper

November 2021

Stockport Events

Woodford War Memorial
Community Centre, Chester
Road, SK7 1PS

Sat 13th November 1pm
Annual Honey Show

Weds 8th December 7.15pm
Christmas Party

Weds 12th January 7.30pm
Bee Stings - Julia Piggott

Zoom Events

Tues 7th December 7.30pm
Dr Alexandra Sapoznik -
Beekeeping in the Middle Ages

<https://cheshire-bka.co.uk/events/>

Catch Up - County Honey Show Video Recording

If you are registered as a member on the CBKA website you can access a video recording showing judges comments and winners of honey show classes

<https://cheshire-bka.co.uk/members/meeting-video/>

From The Chair

Peter Carefoot

I have recently written to all Headteachers in the Stockport area and invited them to participate in a Trees for Bees project. Alan Towse has sourced free fruit trees, and the plan is to plant one in each school. The half-term break has interrupted communications, and we hope things will start to move soon. It would be good if SBKA members could help with the planting and create a link with their local school. I will publish more details soon.

I attended two recent events alongside several committee colleagues. The first at Woodbank Park supported the **Kindling Trust** on their Harvest Day. On a breezy and showery day, honey and wax products sold well. There was plenty of hot homemade soup and delicious cakes to keep us warm and happy.

The second event was an exhibition at St. Thomas's Church High Lane entitled **Small Steps to Save the Planet**. We had a stall with details of our organisation. Sales of local honey and bee-related products were strong, with many of these destined for Christmas presents. It was an enjoyable day and very satisfying at being able to support local groups.



Peter at the High Lane Event

Much of the work falls on my colleagues on the Committee, and it would be good if more members could help ease the workload and build relationships with local groups. **Please let me know if you are interested in becoming more involved.**

There will be three vacancies on the General Committee in 2022, so now is the time to think about becoming influential in the running of SBKA.

We intend to appoint two Project Managers for our **World Bee Day** event in Stockport Town Centre and a **Bee Health Day** at Woodford Community Centre. If you fancy managing either of these, contact me for a discussion.

Peter Carefoot



Who's on the Committee?

Peter Carefoot - Chair

Paul Wheeldon - Vice Chair

Roy Brocklehurst - Apiary Manager

David Lilley - Deputy Apiary Manager

Tricia Watkins - Programme and Events Manager

Pat Booth - Honey Show Manager

Colin Booth

Alan Towse - Education Secretary

Brian Gee

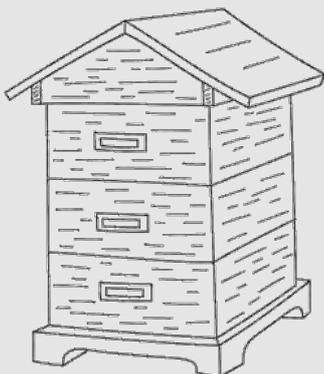
Liz Sparkes

Alistair Taylor - Treasurer

Steve Donohoe - Secretary

Next Committee Meeting

Thursday 13th January 2022 at 7.15pm
Woodbank Meeting Room
(Committee members only)



Stockport BKA stand at the 'Small Steps to Save the Planet' event

From The Apiary - Peter Carefoot

October is usually straightforward in my beekeeping calendar. After the honey has been extracted and the supers cleaned by the bees, I feed, where necessary, with inverted syrup. This year three of my four production colonies have not been interested in storing the syrup. They have taken the syrup slowly, and I think they are simply using it for immediate use. My double brood colony is taking it for storing but has started to slow down. The daytime temperatures have been balmy, and the bees have been very active. S and I have been clearing brambles and branches from the apiary. I was in a t-shirt until the bees started to get too interested, and I put on the veil.

All the colonies are very active, and on October 27, there was a good showing of new bees in the midday sun. The balsam has now finished. The ivy has been good this year but has all but gone too. The bees have been bringing big loads of ivy pollen all through October, and I suspect there are a lot of bees inside. I now wonder if they have enough stores. I am reluctant to check the boxes; I prefer to let the bees get on with their winter set-up. I will keep a very close watch on stores, and I have fondant packs ready for use.

On the farm, the one-eyed gander

has finally died naturally. Its place in the pecking order was taken by an aggressive gander who has spent the last couple of weeks bossing everything that gets in its way, including me. I admit to being a bit apprehensive when he comes running and hissing. He should calm down soon until nesting time in the springtime, when he will start his posturing again.

I have finally started jarring the honey. I am not enthusiastic about the process of honey extraction through to putting it in jars and tend to procrastinate until pushed. The pushing this year, as always, is from neighbours and family wanting honey. Just another 150 jars to fill.



Fondant can be used to feed bees in winter/ early spring if they need it

Branch Meeting Review

There were 41 members of Cheshire Beekeepers at the Stockport branch meeting at Woodford on October 13th to hear **Paul Beardmore** from Happy Valley Honey give an entertaining talk on 'How I got into commercial beekeeping'.

Paul explained that he did not set out to be a commercial beekeeper, but things just happened along the way, and he grew from being a single hive owner to having over 100. As well as managing his bees which produce about 2 tonnes of honey in a good year, he also owns the online shop **Modern Beekeeping** supplying equipment to fellow commercial beekeepers and the general public.

He manages a team of four full-time staff, including apprentices, one of which is now his 'expert' on grafting for rearing his local queens. Some of the bees are moved around England

to support farmers growing crops that are dependant on pollination.

Despite their varied and busy jobs, his team still inspect the hives every seven days. Swarming is managed by removing the queen to a nuc and reducing queen cells down to one, allowing natural mating. Paul clips the wings of queens which helps prevent the loss of bees through swarming.

He also buys queens to supplement his homegrown varieties, which created a discussion about the rights of doing this. Paul's perspective is that the breeding expertise in some countries in Europe is very advanced and he wants to bring the benefits of that into his apiaries.

As usual, Pat and Sarah provided excellent refreshments while Paul chatted and answered questions.

End of Beekeeping at Dunham Estate

Peter Carefoot wrote to the National Trust asking them to comment on the disappointment felt by many members about the cessation of beekeeping in the gardens of the Dunham Massey estate. He said:

The National Trust website states that that: "The work of a beekeeper is vital for the survival of the honey bee. Find out more about how the National Trust is looking after honey bees across many of its special places". I am sure the general public is also concerned with yet another decision from NT that does not support the interests of protecting nature.

Here is their reply:

We sadly took the decision earlier this year to stop beekeeping at Dunham Massey Hall. This was in part because we find ourselves with a reduced team of only six staff in the garden, following a restructure as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. This meant that we've had to make some difficult decisions about what activities we're able to support, alongside our significant core task of looking after the gardens at Dunham.

site only the two near the rose garden were really thriving. We were keen to continue beekeeping here, but after consulting with the volunteer beekeepers they advised that keeping only two hives was not a practical way forward.

Therefore we made the decision to end beekeeping at Dunham Massey Hall. However, we're delighted that we've managed to rehome the hives on the Dunham Massey Estate at Red House Farm, Boundary Farm and Ash Farm. The bees will continue to produce honey whilst also pollinating the different crops grown on each farm. We'll continue to support the honey bee, insects and nature in general through our working practices at Dunham and with partners in the wider local area.

As somebody with an apiary at Red House Farm I can confirm that there are plenty of honey bees in the area! It's a lovely site but not great for honey, possibly because of the volume of bees. Many members will know that we can support all pollinators by providing habitats in which they thrive. This means allowing some land to be 'wild' with no use of chemicals.

Steve Donohoe

Local Honey For Sale

As secretary I get many requests for local honey. I respond with a list of beekeepers who have asked for their details to be circulated. **If you sell your honey through a retail outlet - shop or garden centre** please email your contact details to The Secretary secretary@stockportbeekeepers.co.uk

Branch Honey Extractor

The Branch honey extractor is available for hire at a cost of **£1 per day** or part day. It is available to be collected from and returned to my home in Glossop. The address will be given at the time of booking. Contact **Peter Carefoot** on 01457 238664 or

chairman@stockportbeekeepers.co.uk

Contact Details

If you want to contact the secretary (Steve Donohoe) the new email address is:

secretary@stockportbeekeepers.co.uk

Feel free to send in any articles for the newsletter, snippets of news or events.