



Stockport Beekeeper

January 2022

Stockport Events

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

**Beginners Course starts Mon
10th January** at Aquinas College
(fully subscribed) - runs for 7
weeks

**Stockport Beekeepers A.G.M.
and Beekeepers' Question
Time** - now to be a Zoom event
on **Weds 9th February** at
7.30pm

www.stockportbeekeepers.co.uk/events
has a full list of events

Zoom Events

Weds 12th January 7.30pm
Bee Stings - Julia Pigott

<https://cheshire-bka.co.uk/events2/>

Weds 2nd February 8.00pm
Queen Rearing For The Small
Producer - Randy Oliver
(you need to register for this
lecture provided as part of the
Ulster Beekeepers' Lectures -
places may be limited)

<https://www.ubka.org>

From The Chair

Peter Carefoot

2021 Branch Report:

The year began when our expectations were dashed with the cancellation of the Beginners' Theory course, which should have started at Aquinas College, Stockport. However, several of those due to attend were able to join online classes from the central Cheshire team. The early year lockdown presented several challenges for the branch.

Eventually, with the easing of restrictions the Committee was able to start getting members together for events. The early attempts were sparsely attended as members were cautious about meeting in groups. As confidence returned so did the members' trust in the attempts of the committee to keep things safe.

The Beginner's Practical ran its full course through May and June with full attendance for all sessions. There was lots of support from beginners with many continuing to attend weekly apiary sessions.

The first inspections at Woodbank Apiary confirmed 5 lost colonies. One very small late swarm did manage to survive in a poly nuc and developed into a productive colony. The focus for Roy and David was to develop the apiary to full strength through in-house

splits and combinations. The apiary attempt at grafting new queens failed after a mix up with dates. There is no room for error when managing queen rearing dates, the bees don't hang about waiting for the beekeeper. By September the apiary was up to full strength. The honey yield was down at 200 lbs at the expenses of building colony strength and supporting the bees through the coming winter.

At the AGM in February Brian Gee stepped down as Chairperson. It was to be June before Stephen Donohoe took over as Secretary, enabling Peter Carefoot to be elected as Chairperson.

Catherine Edwards-Evans stepped down as events Manager and was replaced by Tricia Watkins, who soon proved a very able replacement benefiting from Catherine's mentorship.

At the end of the year, Roy Brocklehurst announced he was retiring from the role of Apiary Manager after many years. David Lilley has been shadowing Roy for a couple of years and is now an able replacement. Pat and Roy Booth will also step down from committee work at the end of the year. Pat has been the Show Manager for many years and her attention to detail will be a hard act



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

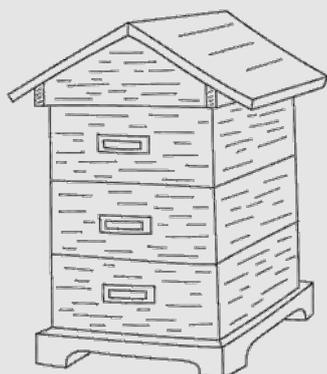
Liz Sparkes

Alistair Taylor - Treasurer

Steve Donohoe - Secretary

Next Committee Meeting

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



to follow.

Branch meetings stated again after lockdown with apiary meetings in June and July at Woodbank. The August meeting was at Happy Valley Honey, hosted by Paul Beardmore and his family. It was an excellent visit, with Paul demonstrating a variety of varroa treatments. Paul also presented the October meeting at Woodford, when over 40 members attended his talk on how he started commercial beekeeping.

The branch honey show was on November 13 when there were over 140 high quality entries. The final event of the year was the Hot Pot supper at Woodford. With numbers

restricted to satisfy Covid protocols, 40 members enjoyed excellent food, a raffle and Alan Towse's fiendishly tricky quiz.

The branch finances remain strong though income was down due to Covid restrictions. The Branch has changed its banker to ensure better compliance with Charity Commission requirements for more secure controls on monetary transactions. With a full calendar of events through 2022, the committee aims to fully support the Beekeeping community with special things to attract and retail new members.

Branch membership: 252

Peter Carefoot

A Bit Of Culture

This Christmas we passed the time watching Shakespeare's History Plays in order. Having really enjoyed our talk on medieval beekeeping, this speech from Henry V. Act 1 stood out for me.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says:

*".....the honey bees
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king and officers of sorts;
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home,
Others, like merchants venture trade abroad,
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds;
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent royal of their emperor;
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold,
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,
The poor mechanic porters crowding in
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,
The sad eye'd justice, with his surly hum,
Delivering o'er to executors pale
The lazy yawning drone....."*

Sue O'Connor

Stockport BKA AGM and Beekeepers' Question Time

The important business of our annual general meeting takes place on **Weds 9th February at 7.30pm** by Zoom. The link to the zoom meeting has not yet been created. It should be available on the 'events' section of the Cheshire BKA web site from about mid January.

As well as the AGM, which won't take long, there is a Q&A session - don't miss it!

Membership Fees 2022

Members should have received an email from Liz Camm entitled *Cheshire BKA online renewal invitation* (I got mine on 1st December 2021). This has a unique link for each member so that they can renew online. There is a slower way to renew using paper, but if you can renew online please do as it is better and enables you to amend details etc.

If you haven't renewed, please do!

BBKA Modules

The syllabi for the BBKA module exams have been updated for 2022.

The updated syllabi are available on the BBKA website alongside updated reading lists:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/modules>

SBKA Membership

Our membership has risen to 252 members (and climbing). At the end of 2020 it was 219.

REMINDER: Membership Fees are now due - you should have received an email from Liz Camm with details of how to renew your membership electronically

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.

From The Apiary

The weather has been so mild at times that the bees have been out flying as if it was an early spring day. I noticed a few bees on a nearby Mahonia bush with pollen on their legs. All this leads me to think there is more activity than in previous years inside the hives. I am not sure if this activity means more stores have been used, or even if there is more brood than in previous years. I am reluctant to open up the colonies.

I am rubbish at hefting, so I will add some fondant and keep a close eye on consumption. I thought I left plenty of stores in the autumn, and my plan was not to feed fondant unless necessary. However, I am having a crisis of confidence in my skills, so the fondant will be added unless the hives are heavy. In previous years I have used bakers fondant but found it a bit messy. This year I am using Apipasta, a prepared specialist fondant. I will place it over the crown board opening under a very shallow insulated eke.

This first week in January I am treating each colony for varroa, using one treatment of oxalic acid sublimation. I have done this for several years, and I am satisfied

Feeding Bees

Successful over-wintering of bees involves ensuring that they go into winter heavy with stored honey (or sugar provided by the beekeeper). Normally the bees consume very little until around February/March when brood rearing ramps up. If colonies run low on stores they

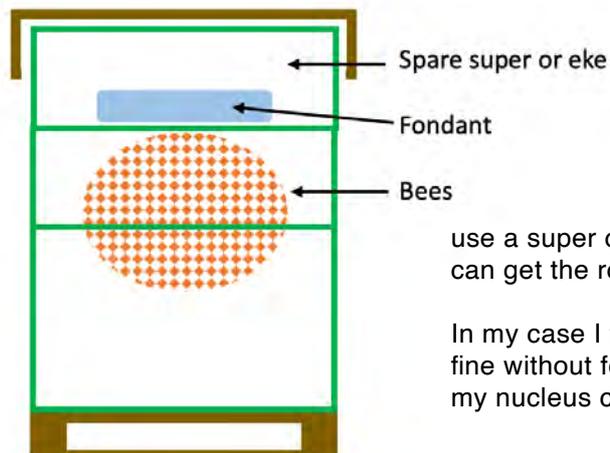
with the results. I also use this technique when I have a swarm, with good results.

At the church chicken pen, there are some new arrivals, two Buff Orpington chickens and a white bantam. They are in close quarantine locked away because of bird flu. My dog loves the freedom of roaming without the temptation of hunting a chicken.

On the farm, D. is also feeding the fowl in quarantine. I met him carrying a large bag of lettuce. These are necessary greens for the ducks and geese. The bees are less active on the high ground with the wind whistling down the Woodhead Pass. There is a satisfying buzz inside when I put my ear to the hive wall and tap the entrance block. I have used some extra strong strapping as a precaution against the wind. There is little evidence of badger activity at the moment, but the strap will offer little resistance against the strength of a grown badger.

So not much to do in the apiary but lots to keep me awake in the early hours.

Peter Carefoot



could die, but this is unlikely if they were heavy in the autumn. As Peter says above, if you are in doubt it's probably wise to err on the side of caution - better safe than sorry and all that. Some people put a block of fondant on the bees as a matter of course, just as an insurance policy. Fondant

can be placed directly on the frames in an emergency or on top of the hole in the cover board. You will need to use a super or an eke so that you can get the roof on.

In my case I find that my hives do fine without fondant but sometimes my nucleus colonies need it.

Steve Donohoe