



Stockport Beekeeper

February 2022

Stockport Events

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

March 9th 7.30 p.m.

Nutrition, it ain't all about sugar & honey

Sebastian Owen

[www.stockportbeekeepers.co.uk/
events](http://www.stockportbeekeepers.co.uk/events)

has a full list of events

Cheshire BKA Event

Cheshire Beekeepers' Annual Spring Convention & AGM

March 5th 9.30am to 4.30pm at

The Vale Royal Abbey Golf and
Country Club, Whitegate,
Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2BA

[https://cheshire-bka.co.uk/spring-
convention/](https://cheshire-bka.co.uk/spring-convention/)

Three speakers plus a meal!

Zoom Events

Stockport Beekeepers A.G.M. and Beekeepers' Question

Time - now to be a Zoom event
on **Weds 9th February** at

7.30pm

[https://cheshire-bka.co.uk/
events/categories/stockport/](https://cheshire-bka.co.uk/events/categories/stockport/)

From The Chair

Peter Carefoot

Alistair has been busy preparing the 2021 accounts for the AGM, and all members will now have a copy. The finances remain healthy. The committee has agreed to the spending plans for the coming year to support a wide range of activities.

The beekeeping theory course is well underway and is again fully subscribed if fewer students due to covid constraints. The practical classes start at Woodbank Apiary on May 18, for six weeks, and is an ideal opportunity to refresh your skills. Already the places are filling, so contact Alan to make a reservation.

There are three apiary visits planned. Graham Royle and Paul Beardmore will host one each at their apiaries. The third will be at the Woodbank apiary with a topic to be agreed upon. The Beekeeping Taster Day is always popular, and Alan Towse will be arranging one to coincide with activity at the Kindling Trust gardens. If your friends or family fancy keeping bees, this is the ideal opportunity to test themselves with live bees.

The Bee Health Day will be the main event of the year to coincide with World Bee Day on May 21. Mark McLaughlin will bring his

team to Aquinas College to lecture and demonstrate caring for our bees.

In 2019 there was a very successful event in Stockport town centre to celebrate World Bee Day, and we have made tentative steps to work with Stockport Council to hold another in Mersey Way, Stockport.

There is a comprehensive programme of talks and lectures planned until the end of the year, with the last event a celebration at Christmas time. A timetable of events is available on the SBKA website.

All this requires a lot of commitment, and with some of the experienced committee members stepping back to enjoy their home beekeeping, there is a need for new committee members.

Helping fellow beekeepers, making new friends and learning even more about beekeeping can all add up to be a fulfilling experience. Any level of experience from beginner to years of experience will be most welcome. Contact me if you want a chat about how you can help.

Peter



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

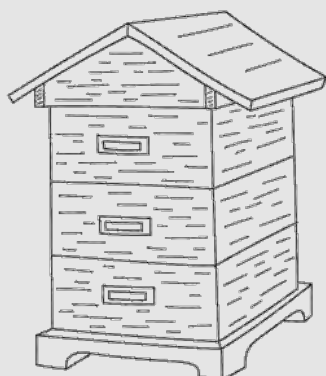
Alistair Taylor - Treasurer

Steve Donohoe - Secretary

Next Committee Meeting

To be determined...

Woodbank Meeting Room
(Committee members only)



At The Apiary

At last, we have sold all our honey, and I say that with a sigh of relief. Any enthusiasm for harvesting, processing and selling our honey is at the low end of the enjoyment spectrum. The last jars went in a rush after Christmas when neighbours came back for seconds or thirds. Some jars have found their way 'down south' with family visits, whilst one person has bought supplies for hay fever season. It's all good news financially, enabling sustainability from an equipment and supplies aspect for the coming season. I have no desire to expand beyond our four production colonies, with two in support.

The Back to Basics article in February BeeCraft, by Andrew Bax, has inspired me to pay more attention to my long hive experiment. The bees are a delight to handle, and I try not to interfere. However, I'm sure I can get more honey with a bit more focus. My pleasure in beekeeping is the joy of being with bees. I enjoy just sitting and watching, that is until the bees get a bit too interested in me. After listening to Julia's Bee Stings presentation, I must try not to breathe! Human breath is a sting stimulant for honey bees.

The two tawny owls at the church are courting. S. and I listened to the hoots and shrieks and then watched the male until he flew away. A

Swarm Collection

Swarm collectors from 2020 must confirm their intention to continue for 2021 and also confirm their contact details. If you want to be added to the 2021 BBKA list you must have the BBKA Basic Assessment exam and to do this you must have managed one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months. All applications must be ratified by SBKA Committee. For more details of BBKA modules visit the Cheshire Beekeepers' website

Beekeeping Mentors

In 2020 several members supported new beekeepers through mentoring. However, the list of those requiring a mentor was longer than those members prepared to be a mentor.

roosting place is on the downspouts from the gutter of the church. On the ground beneath, scattered owl pellets show a diet of shrews and black beetles. There is a lot of black and shiny beetle armour, all that remains from the digestive process. S. is making an owl box. It's too late for this year's nest, but we have high hopes for next year.

I am relieved to have finished the varroa treatment by oxalic acid vapourisation. I did heft the hives but inconclusively, so there is now a block of fondant on each. All colonies are alive and vibrant, and all that remains is to keep a close eye on fondant consumption. There is no sign of squidgy bee poo around the entrances.

I have made a few frames but gave up after hitting my nearly frozen fingers with the hammer. There is time yet as the days get warmer. A quick check of supers, in the cold shed, showed no signs of wax moth or mould. After honey extraction, I give the supers back to the bees to clean up, and they do a good job. It's all extra jobs, but it works for me.

Days are getting longer, and my spirits rise for dry and warm days. But many a cold spell is yet to come.

Peter Carefoot

Mentoring can be done on a designated one to one basis by physically working together, by telephone or via email. It can also be a combination or all these methods.

If you would like to be a beekeeping mentor or to have the support of a mentor, contact the secretary on

secretary@stockportbeekeepers.co.uk

Membership

Subscriptions for 2021 are now due. Your renewal form was in the January edition of Cheshire Beekeeper.

If you have lost this form a replacement can be downloaded from The Cheshire Beekeepers' website, but Liz Camm much prefers

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.

members to renew electronically. You can contact her at:

theseecretary@cheshire-bka.co.uk

If you apply over the internet, and pay by BACS, make sure you send a form to Liz Camm, Membership Secretary. Her address is on the form.

Spreading The Word

Last year, or perhaps the one before, I stumbled upon the Ulster BKA 'Winter Webinars,' and I'm so glad I did. The speakers are often very well informed about whatever the latest things going on in the beekeeping world are. Many webinars on bees contain bits that I've heard before, but I don't mind at all. This walrus needs to re-read or re-hear good info regularly to prevent him from straying down some rabbit hole – which inevitably ends badly due to the size difference between rabbits and walruses.

Sharing Data

I'm always delighted when beekeeping webinar speakers have some experimental data to share, although I'll happily take anecdotes and opinions from people who have succeeded over decades. In the end, we do have to do what works for us, which may not suit other locations or ways of working – however, the more of those rabbit holes I avoid, the better.

Enthusiasm

The presentation by Prof. Robert Paxton on bee viruses was terrific. Lots of science presented with incredible enthusiasm. Some people have a talent for sharing their joy and wonder with others, almost as if they have just discovered it, even though it's probably something they have done repeatedly for years. I suppose it's like Taylor Swift (or any musician) having to balance her back catalogue with new songs – she does it with a smile and gives it everything, even if it's for the thousandth time. Somehow, I have compared walruses to rabbits and a biology professor with a musician. Weird how the mind works.

Deformed Wing Virus

At the University of Sussex, Robert

Also, please tick a gift aid box and sign it so that Cheshire BKA can reclaim the tax.

If you do not renew your subs, your Bee Disease Insurance will lapse at the end of March, a time when you are most likely to need this. Also your subscription to BBKA will end. After March there will be a 40 day waiting period before you can claim.

Paxton was working on his PhD while I was there as an undergraduate studying Chemistry with Economics. I probably bumped into him at some point – knowing me, in a bar – not realising that 37 years later, I'd be glued to my iMac watching his talk on bee viruses.

The essence of Prof. Paxton's message was that Deformed Wing Virus (DWV) is nasty for honey bees. Although many viruses were already present in bees, the advent of the varroa mite changed things dramatically. The one virus which seemed to benefit most from Varroa, at the cost to our bees, was DWV.

What's more, a strain – DWV B – is more virulent than the original DWV A and appears to be becoming dominant in bee populations. The fact is that if you, or in rare cases your bees, don't control varroa mites, your bees will die within three years. Not exactly headline news, but good to see the research that goes into backing up what beekeepers experience.

Pollinator Problems

There is evidence that DWV spreads from honey bees to wild bees, probably by visiting the same flowers simultaneously. The virus flow seems to be one way, from honey bees to wild bees, not the other way around. We know from our own experience that viruses can hop from one species to another, sometimes with disastrous consequences. However, many wild bees and pollinators visit different flowers to the ones preferred by honey bees.

From: *The Walrus and the Honey Bee* (Blog)

Steve Donohoe