



NEWSLETTER – November 2024

STEERING GROUP MEMBERS 2024/2025

Tim Bullock	Mick Carter	Justin Downes
Stephen Greenaway	Clive Harris	Kathy Hobson
Kevin Holt	Marcel Marsh	Matt O'Dell
Nicola Perrett	Barry Roberts	

ALL CHANGE

As you would have seen from the AGM minutes all existing Steering Group members (Justin being co-opted after the AGM) and 4 new members now make up the Steering Group. At a lively meeting lots of new ideas for the Club's future were discussed and will be put in to operation over the next few months.

Stephen Greenaway has stood down as Vice Chair and Marcel Marsh has taken over the role

Due to work pressure Justin is handing over the job as Newsletter Editor to someone else – that person is not yet confirmed so Kathy has put together this one.

APIARY NOTES - Tim Bullock (Chair)

The weather seems to finally cooling down – frost forecast as I write. Colonies seem to have finally clustered and shut down for the winter but the ones I've hefted are quite lite. All mine now have fondant on them just in case (usually I add this around Christmas when I do my varoa treatments).

Beekeeping in December is mostly about checking - are the bees/hives safe and secure, have they got enough feed, are they warm and dry enough, are pests (mice, badgers, woodpeckers etc), being kept out, is your beesuit(s) clean and secure ready for use in the spring, etc. etc. The real key bits are to check that hives are secure enough so they can't blow over or get knocked over and have the colonies got enough stores to see them through. It's worth hefting your hives every couple of weeks to estimate the amount of stores left. **If in doubt strap down hives and give them fondant.** With the first half of November having been far warmer than normal, it's likely that colonies have used more stores than usual. It's likely that we may well need to feed fondant earlier this winter.

If spares are stored outside it's worth checking that they are secure, watertight and wax moth free. Do the cleaning of spares now so they are ready for use next spring/summer.

If you're planning on using oxalic acid for varroa treatment, it might get cold enough by the end of the month to treat between Christmas and new year. The key is to treat when colonies are broodless. Follow the instructions to the letter including the use of PPE.

MEMBERSHIP

If you are intending to renew your membership please let Kathy know and the renewal invitation will be emailed to you again. If you are not renewing this year please email Kathy asap so the records can be updated.

HELP!!!!

Our coveted Skittles Trophy is missing – did you win it last? – have you put it a safe place? Barry Roberts our 2024 champion is waiting to be presented with it!!!! Can any of you solve the mystery?

FACEBOOK

The Club's Facebook page is now up and running again – thanks to Matt O'Dell. Don't forget to "follow"

SDBKA APIARIES – Park Farm and TWIGS

The colonies at both Apiaries are doing well and will hopefully survive the winter.

We hope to develop further the mentoring side of the Apiary at Park Farm for new beekeepers in 2025. Further information will be included in a future Newsletter

VISIT TO THE NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

10 members attended this and had a fantastic day out. They are all looking forward to future events of this kind.



ARTICLE from Member Andy Phillipson

On holiday in the Black Forest (Schwarzwald) in Baden-Württemberg I was interested to see what honey such a beautiful region produced. Our hotel breakfast buffet had a very handy honey-dispenser. A short push against a small lever deposited a small quantity of honey, no waste, no dribbles! The only note of warning was the range of flavours - Forest, Flower and Orange Blossom! The dispenser was produced by **Hof Göken** whose website explains they sold honey from their own hives from 1812 to 1962. Since then, they claim to sell honey mainly from EU producers but I don't know what had been put into the dispenser. The supermarket offering was of honey blends from EU and non-EU countries, so no let up from fake Chinese honey in Germany.

Great quantities of Black Forest Honey were being sold in the many cuckoo-clock shops. All were runny, allegedly varieties of Forest and flower honeys and, like the supermarkets, honey blends from EU and non-EU countries. I found one shop selling a local honey, a blend of fir and spruce honey (Tannen/Fichte). I believe that fir and spruce yield honeydew and are not a source of nectar. The shop owner described how her mother produced spruce "honey" by boiling tips from the trees, straining the liquor and then boiling again with sugar. Recipes for this spruce "honey" abound on German websites. I think there is a case of 'buyer beware' here.

When leaving the area we drove along a scenic route and saw a large trailer on the side of the road advertising local honey. The unattended trailer was well stocked with three different varieties of honey - all from a local bee-keeper (Imker). The trailer had an honesty box and was equipped with CCTV. A little sign pointed out that "God and the neighbours know everything".

I bought a 500g jar of Waldhonig (Forest Honey) for € 7.50. It is a mahogany colour with a distinct aroma of molasses and the texture is very thick. The flavour carries molasses and is slightly resinous, not dissimilar to ivy honey but not as sharp or medicinal. The label defines the product as Deutscher Honig and adds the description Waldhonig and shows it is from the Kupferbergimkerei (Kupferberg apiaries). The name and address in Schapbach of the bee-keeper is given and a BB date of 31.12.26 is on a label on the base of the jar.

CLUB MEETINGS

28.11.24 Stanton Beekeepers – Ron Hoskins Legacy

Haydon Wick Club, Blunsdon Road, Swindon SN25 1JD *The meeting starts at 7pm*

No meetings December and January

We are moving to a new venue!!! From February the Club meetings will take place at The Tawny Owl Pub, Taw Hill, Swindon SN25 1WR. Meetings will start at 7.30pm

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

If you have photos or articles you would like share then please let Kathy Hobson know.