

West Wilts BKA News



News, the planned activities, and some advice for members of West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association



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This is your 'go to' section that will describe the things that you need to know about.

Good to know **page 3**

The 'fun bits': news and reports.

My goodness – where did this year vanish to? It is hard to believe it is December already. I hope you all had a successful beekeeping year and that your bees are tucked up safely for the winter.

That being said - hives still seem to be busy – we are all very aware of keeping hive stores topped up – Den our Apiary Manager still has fondant and Hive Alive if you need it – there is a message about that in this newsletter on page 7.

If you are lost for ideas for Christmas gifts for yourselves and others, take a look at page 15 of this newsletter where you will find information about the return of WWBKA clothing supplies. Please note, you will need to order through the supplier website.

Please book your meal for the annual dinner (January 20th) – details on page 4

The only thing left to say is that I hope all members a pleasant and relaxing Christmas!

DIARY OF EVENTS

As we head towards the end of the year you will see less events advertised to put in your diary – however, you will find already plans are being made for 2025.

January 2025

WWBKA Annual Dinner. Monday 20th January 2025: The Farmhouse, Southwick BA14 9QD. We are asked to meet at 6.30pm for 7.00pm dinner (FIND FULL DETAILS ON PAGE 4)

May 2025

The Royal Bath and West Show 2025 Thursday 29th May to Saturday 31st May 2025 [Royal Bath & West Show | The Bath & West Showground](#)

October 2025

Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2025: Saturday 11th October 2025 – 10am to 4pm [Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2025 - Wiltshire Beekeepers Association](#) at The Devizes Corn Exchange, Market Place, Devizes SN10 1HS (incorporates the County Honey Show).

BBKA National Honey Day: on 21st October, each year **The British Beekeepers' Association celebrates National Honey Day**

National Honey Show 2025: Thursday 23rd to Saturday 25th October 2025 at Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, UK [National Honey Show homepage - National Honey Show](#)

Need to know

Lectures

You can see the "Preparing for Winter" BBKA zoom meeting on YouTube by searching on the BBKA website you can also see 'Mead' with Michael Badger (from Tuesday 15th October 2024)

The BBKA zoom meeting from 19th November (Kirsty Stainton – varroa) is not available at the moment due to a problem with the website, it is hoped that it will be available online sometime in the future

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

Tuesday 21st January 2025:, 7pm Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus': Giles Budge

18th February 2025: Keith Bartlem, 'An Inspector Calls'

18th March 2025: Jenny Morgan, Preparing for Exams

Further details for each talk will be available nearer the time.

GOOD TO KNOW

Message from the Committee



Please note: the WWBKA Swarm coordinator post holder has changed.

More information will follow next month.

Asian Hornet 2024 Rolling update

(The information below has been taken from the National Bee Unit.... For additional information and more background information, please refer back to the National Bee Unit where the most up to date information is always available).

As of 19/11/2024:

71 credible Yellow-legged hornet sightings have been reported in the UK in 2024.

24 nests have been found.

[Asian Hornet 2024 Rolling update » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase](#)

Grid Ref	Date initial sighting	Date confirmed by Lab.	Location	County	Reported by	Sighting/ Nest	Other information	Date nest destroyed
TQ82	3/11/2024	TBC	Beckley	East Sussex	Beekeeper	Single hornet	Found in trap	
TQ75	4/11/2024	TBC	Allington	Kent	Member of the public	Single hornet	On ivy	
TQ70	09/11/2024	TBC	Bexhill on Sea	East Sussex	Member of the public	Single hornet	Flew into shop	Secondary 12/11/2024

Annual Branch Dinner

Have you got the date in your diary for the annual dinner?

The Farmhouse, Southwick BA14 9QD, 20th January 20th. We are asked to meet at 6.30pm for 7.00pm dinner.

Please send food choices to Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com with **surname** and **choices** on your document by email by 20th December

Choices include GF and vegetarian options, (please add information about any food allergies)

Menu

Starters



Vegetable soup

Stilton and mushrooms

Prawn cocktail

Main Course

Chicken in asparagus sauce

Steak and ale pie all served with new potatoes and vegetables

Salmon in Hollandaise Sauce

Leek and mushroom pie, with or without Stilton (please state which at time of ordering)

Lasagne served with salad and garlic bread

Dessert

Chocolate brownie

Malteser cheesecake

Lemon meringue roulade

Mixed trio of ice cream



Cost:

Two courses £23.00

Three courses £30.00

Tea and coffee will be available at the bar (£1.50)

Don't delay - PAYMENTS PLEASE BY 20TH DECEMBER -

ACCOUNT NUMBER 00061511 SORT CODE 30-98-75 WBKA WESTWILTSHIRE BRANCH.

PLEASE ADD YOUR SURNAME AND DINNER TO YOUR PAYMENT TO HELP WITH IDENTIFICATION.

(e.g. SMITH - DINNER)

Round the Committee – we have reached our final committee member – this time we hear from Chris Rawlings...

Question: What is your role on the WWBKA Committee? **Answer:** My role on the committee is as a committee member who has a lot of contacts and knowledge of the beekeeping world. I have previously been Chair twice; I am the Chief Steward and Chair of the Bath and West for the last 20+ years and am Wiltshire delegate at the National Honey Show.

Question: How did you become interested in keeping bees? **Answer:** My boss, John Green, had just started beekeeping and I went to look at his only hive, I got stung between the legs but was hooked. No fencing style suits around at that time just round hat and veil.

Question: How long have you been keeping bees? **Answer:** I started Beekeeping in 1976, just before I married Sue. At that time self-sufficiency was all the rage and the Good Life was on TV.

Question: How many hives do you have, and which hive is/hives are your favourite? (Why?)

Answer: I have about 15 at present, my favourite is the 14x12 national, but I also have standard and 2 x WBC. 14x12 holds a lot more space for winter stores and a larger brood area in the summer which helps to reduce pollen in supers.

Question: Do you like your honey - what do you do with your harvest? **Answer:** Do I like Honey? Yes, I love honey and its many uses, however 2yrs ago it was highlighted that I was at risk of type 2 diabetes and had to reduce sugar intake. So now, "except when judging at shows," I don't have any. I sell most but use a fair amount in my Mead making and showing.

Question: What has been the most useful to given to you that you would like to pass on?

Answer: Useful tip? If you haven't already done it, enrol in a Basic Assessment Course, it will refresh your beekeeping knowledge, and I hope your enthusiasm. If you are in your second year all those things you forgot from your beginners course will be rekindled.

(Round the Committee contd.)

If you are more experienced, it's never too late to get that certificate.

There are lots of different interests you can follow in beekeeping, for example, training or helping at the apiary. I have been a Thornes Agent, involved in showing, honey, crafts, mead, wax products, soap making, and giving demonstrations. The more you do the more beekeepers you meet. In my experience the beekeeping community is a friendly happy community and there is always someone willing to help.



WWBKA HONEY FOR SALE!

The Apiary's 2024 honey is still available to members to buy by the bucket

£5 per lb

If you would like to buy apiary honey, please pay the Treasurer direct after checking with Den the weight of buckets available (this can be done via WhatsApp)

You can contact the Club Treasurer by email at Treasurer-wwbbka@outlook.com

PLEASE NOTE ALL GOODS TO BE COLLECTED FROM THE APIARY ONLY.





A message from the Apiary Manager

A reminder that there is Hive Alive still available in 1 kilo ready to use packs at £4 and fondant in 12 kilo blocks at £20 a box - no postage to pay!!! All available for collection from the apiary, payable to the Treasurer prior to collection.



Please does anyone have a contact who might be able to help?



(STILL) wanted for a WWBKA member –

an out-apiary opportunity for 4 hives preferably within a 5-mile radius of Warminster.

Please direct any responses to newsletter-wwbka@outlook.com

Thank you.



Recipes using honey

Spiced rhubarb, apricot and banana compote with honey

Ingredients

4 level tablespoons of honey

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon of ground ginger

8 ½ fluid ounces dry ginger ale

1 lb pink rhubarb

½ lb dried apricots (or dried peaches or pears)

1 lb firm bananas



Method

1. Place honey, spices and ginger ale and half pint of water in a bowl and mix well.
2. Cut rhubarb into 1-inch lengths – put this – with the dried apricots into the honey/spices/water – cover with cling film and soak for 8 hours.
3. Place fruit and liquor in an oven proof dish, cover lightly with lid and cook in the oven at 350 degrees C for 40 minutes or until tender.
4. Slice bananas diagonally and stir into hot fruit.
5. Turn into serving dish and cool.
6. Serve chilled with whipped cream, crème fraiche or thick Greek yoghurt.
7. To freeze – freeze without bananas – thaw at room temperature, then add bananas and chill again to serve (I prefer this served at room temperature).

The Annual General Meeting of the West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association.

On the evening of 18th November, the WWBKA Branch held its Annual General Meeting at the Westbury Methodist Hall BA13 3JL. The Committee thank all those attending for their support. The agenda was swiftly covered due to the circulation of appropriate documents prior to the meeting. Voting took place and committee member posts were agreed. Cups, shields, certificates, and awards were presented to successful members who were commended on their various successes.



The WWBKA hopes for continued success in 2025. Many thanks to the committee members serving tea, coffee, and biscuits.

The AGM was followed by an eagerly anticipated talk by Chris Rawlings on the subject of "Mead." Chris provided a PowerPoint presentation for members which was combined with a

(The Annual General Meeting of the West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association contd.)

demonstration of various techniques and pieces of equipment. Chris allowed “audience participation” as he progressed through his presentation. Many questions were asked and answered. There was palpable enthusiasm in the subject – and there are hopes that members will attempt production of meads for shows in 2025. Chris was as generous with the sharing of his knowledge and expertise as he was in the sharing of samples of his meads – some of which sported an impressive history of commendations, prizes, and awards.



Thank you very much Chris, it was a memorable talk, and we very much enjoyed listening to you and being allowed to share the fruits of your labours. I totally agree with your philosophy Chris – although it is great to win competitions, it is important to share our skills and knowledge thus strengthening the club.



Can you spare fifteen minutes to help with a survey?

From our Club Secretary – *Pollinator perception project survey – PhD project*

The following message is from **Federica Paradiso, a PhD student at Northumbria University...**

"I am conducting an online survey to assess how the perception of pollinators in urban green spaces varies across different groups of people. The perspective of beekeepers is crucial for my research project, and I would really appreciate it if you could consider circulating this email within your community. This survey involves beekeepers from the entire UK to collect perceptions of people living in or out of cities.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and will include questions on your understanding of the abundance of honeybees and wild pollinators in your area, your interest in nature, and your ideas about pollinator-friendly urban greenspace management practices. Your contribution is invaluable to this research.

To participate please click on the following link:

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/northumbria/managing-urban-pollinators-beekeeper-pilot-survey-corrections-d>

At the end of the project, I will be more than happy to share all the findings with your association.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Federica"

Oxalic acid treatment –

Now is the time to be thinking of oxalic acid treatment – if you look on the internet you will find information there about how to carry this out, or if you are not familiar with this process – perhaps you could "phone a friend" as the saying goes!

A shame that the BBKA Zoom meeting about varroa is not available online for reference (at the time of the newsletter "going to press").

Earlestone – assistance required....

Did you read the email from our Club Secretary regarding the request for help to set up a beekeeping project at Earlestone?

Alison Daniels is leading a project for WBKA to introduce beekeeping at HMP Earlestone (SN10 5TU). The project has recently received approval from the Governor and Alison is keen to hear from members who would like to be part of the project team.

The email you have received from our Club Secretary contains attachments with details. If you have any queries, please contact Alison direct at alidaniels@sky.com.

To join the team going into the prison, you will need to be vetted and, as this can take some time, Alison needs to get the process started as soon as possible. If you definitely want to participate in the prison visits, please complete the appropriate email attachment and return it to Alison direct at alidaniels@sky.com as soon as possible.

Christmas Tree Decorations.

I belong to a few beekeeping groups on the internet. Recently a photo was posted showing comb in a conifer tree from a colony in the wild – in Canada I think... very pretty – a new trend in Christmas tree decoration maybe?



New Valley News Article.

Our eagle-eyed Apiary Manager Den Pictor has spotted an article in the New Valley News – the link below will take you to the online article. The article presented below is directly quoted from that article.

[Wiltshire beekeepers encourage consumers to discover the benefits of buying local honey](#)
[- New Valley News](#)

“Beekeepers across Wiltshire are calling on consumers to discover for themselves the incredible array of benefits that come with buying a jar of honey from their local producer at the Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day (**Devizes Corn Exchange, held on 12th October 2024**), sponsored by Eden Renewables and Whitehall Vineyard.

The Wiltshire Beekeepers' Association (WBKA) represents more than 500 members in Wiltshire. To explain the issues, Lynne Ingram, Chair and Founder of the Honey Authenticity Network UK, was one of the keynote speakers at the event.

Honey fraud is the third biggest food fraud in the world. According to the International Trade Centre, the UK imported an average of 50,917 tonnes of honey in 2023. Some of this will have been adulterated, with added sugars, an ultrafiltration process and even the removal of pollen from the final product. Jars and bottles of 'honey' can be bought off the shelf for as little as 69p, but often feature a blend of products from a number of different countries.

Lynne's fascinating talk lifted the lid on the how, why, and wherefore of honey fraud and adulteration, and the way it impacts on the livelihoods of beekeepers around the world as well as the UK.

In contrast, the Wiltshire Beekeepers Association argued *local* honey means *real* honey. It is made by bees collecting nectar from flowers in Wiltshire, the honey is then extracted from the comb and bottled by each beekeeper, featuring all the goodness that comes with keeping the final product as close to nature as possible. Plants vary widely across the

(New Valley News contd).

Wiltshire landscape, so every beekeeper will produce honey with a different look and taste, offering an endless array of experiences depending on location and season. In fact, National Honey Judges at the Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day's Honey Show sampled pots of honey from a wide range of local producers to identify the best honey in Wiltshire – a hotly contested trophy on the day.

Meanwhile, because the product is extracted and sold within the community, the money spent on a jar of honey is directly reinvested back into the local economy, helping to support small businesses and secure the future legacy of beekeeping within the UK."

Sophie Butcher, Chair of the WBKA, says: *"As a beekeeper I know honey from my own hive tastes delicious and I'm always keen to try other beekeepers' honey as it really does vary so much. Many of our beekeepers will be selling honey at the Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day, where a map of the honeys for sale will help purchasers identify those that come from hives near where they live."*

The event reported on above was held on Saturday 12th October 2024 at the Corn Exchange, Devizes, SN10 1HS.

Still flying!

Here we are on the 30th of November and as far as I can tell, the bees in my hives haven't yet "gone inside and shut the front door" (so to speak).... I wonder how this bodes for next year. The removal of drones seemed to have gone on until late this year, I am sure a couple more were removed from my hive last week – though of course I could be wrong.

So – with little forage around I'm thinking we need to keep a careful eye on stores in the hives... If you go back to page 3 of this newsletter you will see that there is still fondant available from the club.



Members wanting to buy WWBKA clothing can now order directly from the suppliers as the link to ordering clothing is now “live” on the shop website.



All four Beekeeper Products (Fleece, Sweatshirt, Polo Shirt and Cap) are available to order from the OHM website using the following

link: <https://ohmclothing.co.uk/shop/workwear/wiltshire-beekeepers/>

Alternatively, you can go onto the OHM website, click ‘Workwear,’ then ‘Wiltshire Beekeepers’ and you will find all the items listed there.

Please note that all queries will be handled by the shop.

Customer Support - Devizes | OHM Clothing Ltd and OHM Charities

01380 825355

Opening times: 10-5 Tuesday-Friday, 10-2 Saturdays.

Shop: 31 Sheep Street, Devizes, SN10 1DJ

Workshop: Unit 6, Axis Business Centre, Westmead Ind Est, Swindon, SN5 7YS

 <p><i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Unisex Polo Top</p> <p>£16.19</p>	 <p><i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Unisex Sweatshirt</p> <p>£25.79</p>	 <p><i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Cap</p> <p>£10.19</p>	 <p><i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Unisex Fleece</p> <p>£33.79</p>
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Beekeeping supplies.



For Your Beekeeping Supplies

Your local supplier providing a service for:

- All Thorne's supplies
- BBWear suits – try before you buy
- Second hand kit bought and sold
- Available to attend your association, apiary meetings
 - Supporting Trainers, Improvers, Newbies
 - Payment by BACS, card, cash, cheque
 - Deliveries – subject to distance, order size

Please email your order or phone so we can arrange an appointment for you to visit to discuss what you need.

sales@thebeedepot.com

07879 811967

01373 430458

Diane Sleigh

The Apple Garden, Buckland Dinham, Frome, Somerset, BA11 2QP
[what3words poetry.unto.driveway](http://what3words.poetry.unto.driveway)

Contacts and services

Contact details for committee and officers

WWBKA President: President-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Chair: Chair-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Treasurer: Treasurer-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Secretary: Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Apiary Manager: Apiary-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Honey Show Secretary: HoneyShow-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Membership Secretary: Membership-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Asian Hornet Action Team Coordinator: AHAT-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Newsletter Editor: Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com

Services available to members

The following services are provided by West Wilts BKA to members:

Bee Bank (for sale or purchase of queens, nucs and colonies). Contact the Branch Secretary at Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

Bookers Wholesale Customer Card. Contact the Chair at Chair-WWBKA@outlook.com or 07711 018440 for details.

Equipment loan (microscopes, extractors, etc.): Contact the Branch Secretary at Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

Library: Contact our Librarian (through the Secretary)

Swarm Collection Register: Contact Branch Swarm Coordinator (**post holder change – contact information to be added in the January 2025 newsletter**).

Find us on  :West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association