

West Wilts BKA News



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



IN THIS ISSUE

Diary of events **page 2**

Need to know **page 2**

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.

Have you got Hellebores in your garden? So many different colours available and such a pretty site in the garden – appreciated by bumble bees and honey bees alike this time of the year.

Well at last we seem to have had some warm weather and it seems as though spring temperatures are a little more stable now (famous last words).

Do come along to the frame building sessions – bring your hammer and ear plugs – read more about that on page 10.

Do send in your own features to be included – otherwise you will continue to be subjected to my own subjects of choice! Maybe send in your own favourite honey recipe for me to include?

Don't forget that the month of May is not far away – the Royal Bath and West Show looms on the horizon!

DIARY OF EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE - PROVISIONAL DIARY DATES FOR APIARY MEETS ARE ON PAGE 3

April

The BBKA Spring Convention 2025 Friday 4th – Sunday 6th April 2025. Harper Adams University, near Telford, Shropshire, TF10 8NB [Spring Convention | British Beekeepers Association](#)

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](#)

June 2025

Honey Bee Health Day on Saturday 28th June at Market Lavington Community Hall

September 2025

West Wiltshire Branch Honey Show Saturday 27th September. Bratton Jubilee Hal, Melbourne Street, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 4RW

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

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

15th April: 'Swarms' with Lesley Jacques

20th May: 'Building a Strong Colony' with Roger Paterson

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

Good to know

Provisional dates for the club apiary sessions 2025.

Some members missed this in the last newsletter – so here is a repeat of the same information...

"It is really exciting to be able to include the following message about club apiary sessions – I bet all members are keen to "get going"! Please remember that the dates below are dependent upon the state of the bees, and the weather etc... so watch out for additional messages.

It seems that spring is well and truly here when we are able to open the club apiary up to members for regular Saturday sessions. Recent weather has been very "changeable" - one minute sunny and warm and the next we have had very cold winds and grey skies.

These dates are, as always, provisional. If club hive colonies haven't reached adequate strength, or the weather isn't good enough to open the hives dates might be cancelled, sometimes at short notice. If sessions are cancelled, a mailshot will be sent out and the club webpage will be updated. Fingers crossed we plan to open on the following dates:

12th April

26th April

10th May

24th May

7th June

21st June

5th July

19th July

2nd August

16th August

30th August

13th September

We're looking forward to welcoming you back to the apiary, finding out how your bees have fared in the winter, and getting back to working with our bees together."

(Don't forget to bring your cup for a drink!)

April - Plant (s) of the month – have you heard that when the shrub *Ribes Sanguineum* flowers, it is a good indicator that it is round about the time to carry out the first hive inspections of the season? Informed and knowledgeable beekeepers know that much also depends on what they know about how their own hives have fared over the winter months – whether the numbers of bees seem to be thriving and of course what the temperature and conditions are like when you plan to open up your hives.

Ribes Sanguineum

Ribes Sanguineum is reported to be easy to grow in moderately fertile, well-drained soil in full sun and is useful for informal hedging. If you have a mind to – you can propagate this by taking hardwood cuttings in the winter. The shrub is suggested to be suitable to be planted in cottage gardens and for informal planting, for borders and can act as useful for hedges and screening.



(April - Plant (s) of the month contd)

Dandelion (Taraxacum) – this well-known “weed” is just coming into flower in my garden. I have read that it flowers most prolifically in May and June. I confess I do remove a few plants annually because if I do not, they multiply very quickly from the seeds. Honey bees and other pollinators like to forage on them. Perhaps you will allow a few to remain in your garden. If you read about them on the internet you might find as I did, that there are differing opinions about the value of the pollen and the nectar from dandelions. I think I will trust that to the bees themselves – there appear to be a wide variety of insects happy enough to forage on them – maybe if there is little else in the vicinity, then dandelions will suffice!



THIS YEAR - ALREADY!



Yellow-legged Asian hornet tally
January - March 27 2025

Have you seen a yellow legged Asian Hornet?

Yellow-legged Asian hornet, European Hornet, Wasp, Honey bee

Report using the Asian hornet Watch App

Confirmed

23rd January - Oswestry, Shropshire - Specimen
20th March - Canterbury, Kent - Specimen

Please download the Asian Hornet Watch App - report sightings

Apple Android

The poster features the British Beekeepers Association logo on both sides. It includes illustrations of a yellow-legged Asian hornet, a European hornet, a wasp, and a honey bee. Below the illustrations are QR codes for downloading the app on Apple and Android, and a central image of a smartphone displaying the app's interface.

STAY VIGILANT!

National Bee Unit

Best practice guideline No. 6:

February 2025

Spring checks

During spring inspections, the following key points should be checked:

1. Food: Check that there is enough honey and pollen.
2. Health: Check that bees and brood are healthy and thriving.
3. Space: Make sure that there is enough space to expand the brood nest.
4. Queen: Check for brood in all stages. Check if any queen cells are present.
5. Spring clean: Clear the entrance block and change old comb.

(To read the whole document use the following link)

<https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/assets/PDFs/3 Resources for beekeepers/Best practice guidelines/BPG 6 Spring Checks 2018.pdf>

Honey recipe of the month:- Honey Orange Muffins (Roger Patterson's Honey Recipes)

<https://www.honeyrecipes.org.uk/HRRecipes/R00009.html>

Honey Orange Muffins

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup sifted flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ cup wholemeal flour
- 1 egg well beaten
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 tsp grated orange rind
- ½ cup honey
- 3 tbsp melted shortening



METHOD

1. Sift flour, salt, and baking powder together
2. Add wholemeal flour and mix thoroughly.
3. Combine egg, orange juice, honey and shortening.
4. Add all at once to flour, stirring only enough to dampen all flour.
5. Bake in well-greased muffin pans in moderately hot oven 400°F 15-20 mins until brown

I followed Roger Patterson's recipe for orange honey muffins, the recipe and the link to it on the Internet is <https://www.honeyrecipes.org.uk/Cakes.html> For the "shortening" in the recipe I used 3ozs of melted butter.

There was no indication of how many muffins the recipe would make, and I was in a bit of a rush between jobs to get it baked and the kitchen cleared... I decided that twelve is the usual number that a muffin recipe makes and therefore put out twelve paper muffin cases. There wasn't any indication of how much mixture to put into each muffin case - I decided to put two tablespoons into each case. If I make them again I will use less muffin cases and put a little more mixture into each. The recipe suggests cooking them for 15 to 20 minutes - fifteen minutes was plenty of time in my oven - which tends to cook quite quickly - (you know your own oven!)

POLLINATORS TO WATCH OUT FOR...



April pollinator of the month – Buff Tailed Bumblebee

The Buff Tailed Bumblebee is a common sight in UK gardens. The queen hibernates during the winter and then busies herself with looking after her own eggs and brood until the eggs hatch and she then has some help! The Buff Tailed Bumblebee has the habit of “nectar robbing – biting into the bases of flowers for nectar.

**Posted on 11th March 2025 “Women in Beekeeping UK” Group (Facebook) Anne Morley.
(BBKA - The British Beekeepers).**

This time of year, yellow-legged Asian hornet queens are coming out of hibernation and starting to build small embryo nests. These can often be in sheltered outbuilding as well as other locations. Please remain vigilant and report any sighting with an insect photo using the Asian Hornet Watch smartphone app



Photos: John De Carteret



FRAME BUILDING SESSIONS



Dates: Monday 14th April **AND** Monday 28th April

Time: 19:00

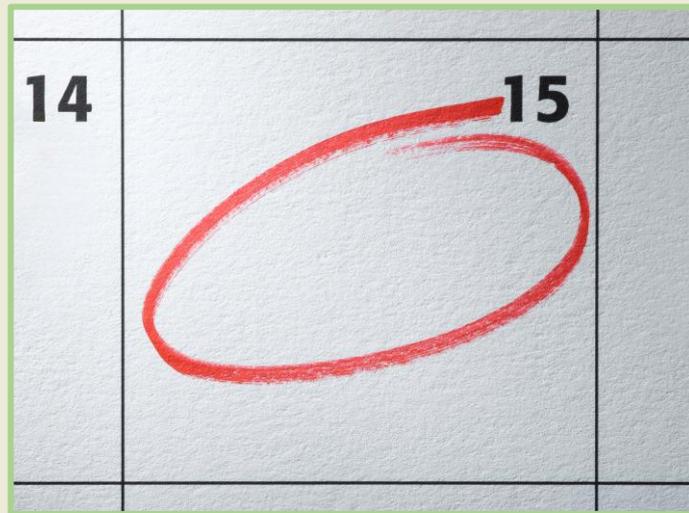
Venue: Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, Westbury, BA13 3JL

Are your bees getting off to a great start this season with all the good weather we've been having? Soon it will be necessary to think about swarm prevention and putting on supers. **The club apiary always needs plenty of assembled frames - last year a frame-building session was held – another is planned for this year - all members are invited to help with this essential preparation for the new season.**

All frames and foundation will be provided, but if you have a small hammer, please do bring that with you to use. The room can get very noisy with all the hammering, so if you have ear plugs, please bring them with you. There will be disposable ear plugs available for anyone who doesn't have any. There will be a supply of tea and biscuits to keep you going too.

The sessions are fun - a good chance to catch up after the winter break, and for beginners to meet some of the other members. All of you are welcome to attend one or both of the sessions; many hands make light work!

The environment will be noisy and there will be tools and equipment – please be aware that due to considerations of health and safety, the environment is not considered to be suitable for the presence of small children.



DON'T FORGET

The following four messages are from our club secretary:

1. Wiltshire County are planning to have a stand at the **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Country comes to Town** event on Saturday 17th May in Chippenham.
Please could anyone interested in manning the stand for a couple of hours get in touch with the WWBKA Secretary know for more information: Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com
2. **Save the date:** Honey Bee Health Day on Saturday 28th June at Market Lavington Community Hall.
3. Spring Convention 4th – 6th April 2025
4. **Reminder** people who have passed BBKA exams can claim a refund for exam fees

DON'T FORGET

Royal Bath & West 2025 - Bees and Honey Section

The Schedule is out for the Honey Show, and you will notice major changes. No entry fees!

Prize cards and/or rosettes, but no prize money.

The schedule has some extra classes suggested by exhibitors last year.

Cyser, Beeswax Flowers 1-5 stems(restricted to non-NHS winners). Plus, some other class changes.

Well worth a look!

The Wiltshire Stand, organised by Gloria, will be looking for volunteers again, 6 per day.

Half day's work for full day ticket.

Help will also be required at **The Bee Garden**, and **Marquee Demonstrations**. (Bring a clean Bee suit if interested)

Setting up the main layout is another time that we look for **help in the marquee** from 10a.m. on Sunday 25th May, any one is welcome to join us with Somerset and Avon members.

If you would like to volunteer to help in a session, please e-mail me at kingbee.cr@gmail.com

stating which day, which session (morning 9am to 1.30pm or afternoon 1pm to 5:30pm) from Thursday 29th, Friday 30th, to Saturday 31st May.

First come first served.

Any **help with breakdown** after 5.30 Saturday would be appreciated.

I am hoping you will all support WBKA entries in the show as we will be looking to win the County with most points again.

Good Luck All!

Chris Rawlings Chief Steward, B&W Honey Section (kingbee.cr@gmail.com)



BBKA April Talk: 'Swarms' 15th April 2025

The next in the BBKA series of Zoom talks will be 'Swarms' with Lesley Jacques NDB on 15th April 2025 at 7pm. A recording of this talk will be available on YouTube for those unable to watch live.

Lesley became an accidental beekeeper after a swarm arrived in her garden in 2011. She very quickly became fascinated by the bees she was tending, and committed to learn more about them, working her way through the BBKA Module and Husbandry exams. She was awarded her Master Beekeeper qualification in 2022 and gained the NDB in 2024. Lesley is Vice Chair of Cheshire Beekeepers' Association as well as being a founder member of Mid Cheshire Beekeepers. Lesley is an examiner for the Basic assessment and is actively engaged with the Association's advanced and beginners' level teaching programmes, typically providing introductions for entry-level beekeepers, tuition and mentoring for the Basic examination and structured teaching for the Module exams. As a scientist by profession, she takes a particular interest in the biology and botanical aspects of beekeeping, and in conveying this to others. Lesley lives in Cheshire with her husband Tony and manages three apiaries with more colonies than she admits to.

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYmZxTImJjpRCLJjYjvblxgybQQdSZ.1>

Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 Passcode: 527929

Dates for the Diary - Future Talks:

20th May: 'Building a Strong Colony' with Roger Paterson 17th June: 'Small Scale Queen Rearing' with Jane Medwell

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

Nina Wilton – Education Officer WWBKA sends us this message on the subject of correspondence courses.

“Dear all - The BBKA Chair of Education has asked me to circulate the following message to our members: In December, the free Module Study resources for members were launched on BBKA Learning Online. These materials have been developed for use by both groups and individuals who want to self-study.

<https://learning.bbka.org.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=2>

You might want to take a look at the YouTube video of a BBKA lecture on running study groups using the Module Study resources. This can also be accessed via the Learning Online platform (Training Resources for Members):

<https://learning.bbka.org.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=1>

For those members who would like to study exactly the same materials but submit their work to a tutor for marking and feedback, we are relaunching the correspondence courses. These will run twice a year as a six-month course - from 1st April to 30th September and from 1st October to 31st March and the cost will be £100 per course.

Please see attached the FAQs document with lots more information. If you have any questions please email: corrcourses@bbka.org.uk

The correspondence courses starting 1st April are now available to purchase from the BBKA web shop.

Kind regards

Jane Medwell”

Thinking about communication in the beekeeping community – my own musings...

I thought I would write a little about my observations of the fact that social media and the internet appear to be playing an increasingly larger part in beekeeping.

The Internet helped to open up the world of beekeeping and improve communication about beekeeping activities. Reading accessible resources on the internet educates beekeepers and “the public” about bees, giving information on how to care for colonies, and about disease prevention and treatment.

I do not know the number of beekeepers in the United Kingdom using their mobile phones to connect to the Internet to read about their bee problems and solutions – and also to use the internet to communicate with fellow beekeepers such as “WhatsApp” to quickly seek answers and receive support from knowledgeable beekeeping friends. I suspect there are a large number of us. In terms of beekeeping, the internet is most likely to be considered to be in its infancy I should think. (Though it is likely also to be considered a fast-growing child!) I know that there are beekeepers who shy away from “technology” such as this and they have gained their vast knowledge and skills through reading “proper” books, and by exposure to working with the bees and other sage beekeepers. However, I do not think it can be denied that the internet has made learning about bees (and many other subjects) more accessible to all people.

One of the problems I see is that there is a huge amount of information – it is hard to be discerning when picking out the best course of action, and as we all know – for each beekeeper we ask about a problem – you will be offered a large number of differing solutions. I suppose the very best foundation to find your way through the maze of beekeeping is a good foundation of practical and theoretical knowledge. From this

(Thinking about communication in the beekeeping community – my own musings. Contd.).

position it is likely that the beekeeper can probably work out whether the information found on the internet is likely to be useful. It is a sad fact that not all you read on the internet is true or best practice, and that is why a sound basic knowledge base can help you work out a few more things for yourself.

As far as sharing communication between each other for ease of communication, many beekeeping clubs have WhatsApp groups. These groups allow consenting members to stay connected with each other to share information about bees, to deliver news, information, and messages, and announce social activities. Members can opt in or opt out of this way of communication if they are not comfortable with this. Members opting out of this method of communication, very often will find the same messages conveyed through club websites.

Effective communication is of course dependent upon the frequency members check websites and WhatsApp etc. for information. Nominated club members take on the task of keeping websites and sending messages, the effectiveness is influenced by the speed and accuracy of the content of the message and the sharing of it. Reliable and up to date information is pleasing.

Of course, it must be remembered that many roles in the local beekeeping community are voluntary, and we all have “other” lives to lead and information sharing activities are often influenced by the pressure of other roles and responsibilities unrelated to beekeeping!

Have you seen the numerous “apps” available to download onto a mobile phone to assist with data collection and communication? Most beekeepers are aware of the well-known app through which to identify and report Asian Hornet sightings and their nests. There are other apps for record keeping that can be found on the internet, have you tried them?

(Thinking about communication in the beekeeping community – my own musings. Contd.).

What do you think? Are they useful or just a gimmick?

Do you use "What Three Words" ? This can be useful to identify the position of our apiaries with accuracy, so it is possible for others to let others know where you are when you are perhaps beekeeping in isolated areas. Covid brought Zoom meetings and Webinars to people who had not used this facility before, and though many are not comfortable with this way of meeting, it is still an effective and economical way of meeting, sharing, and spreading knowledge.

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are often effective ways of sharing and reinforcing ideas and good practice. So much information – and so many different ways of sharing it. I think it is important to have a solid foundation of practice so that when you can sort out the "wheat from the chaff" so to speak. In the end I think a combination of pencil and paper and a good information book can work very well in conjunction with the internet (and a couple of knowledgeable beekeeping friends on the end of the phone).

Elaine Mairis

Disagree with me? Are you bored with my ramblings? Can you write about something more interesting and with more conviction?

I would love to have your features on the beekeeping subject that you are passionate about to include in the next newsletter – do drop me a line WWBKA Newsletter Editor:

Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com

REMEMBER!

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

	
<i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Unisex Polo Top	<i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Unisex Sweatshirt
£16.19	£25.79

	
<i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Cap	<i>Wiltshire Beekeepers</i> West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Unisex Fleece
£10.19	£33.79



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

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 WWBKA Secretary: Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

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

Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

Library: Contact our Librarian (either direct or through the Secretary)

Swarm Collection Register: Contact Branch Swarm Coordinator (David Raines on 07711 018440 and

david.raines@hna.uk.com).

Find us on  :West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association