

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.

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The 'fun bits': news and reports.

Above is a photo of a honey bee on a bramble flower – taken on a nearby field a couple of weeks ago – in May! It seems as though the very warm weather we had at the beginning of May has really brought the blackberries into flower – I have been noticing the pollen in the frames of my bee hives.

Special thanks are extended to members who volunteered to man the WWBKA stall and all those giving time to help organise and manage various aspects of the Royal Bath and West Show. Well done to all exhibitors too!

DIARY OF EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE - PROVISIONAL DIARY DATES FOR APIARY MEETS ARE ON PAGE 8

June 2025

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

August 2025

"Taster Day" on 2nd August at the apiary – please contact Nina for additional details.

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

No other details available – but check the BKA website to review any of the online lectures you might have missed

Good to know

As if you needed reminding – but just in case!



www.nonnativespecies.org

Alert!

Report sightings of this species:

- with the iPhone and Android recording app: **Asian Hornet Watch**
- online at: www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet
- by email: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk



Yellow-legged hornet (aka Asian hornet)

Species Description

Scientific name: *Vespa velutina*

Native to: Asia

Habitat: Nests usually high in trees and man made structures, sometimes closer to the ground; hunts honey bees, other insects and also feeds on fruit and flowers.

Not easily confused with any other species. Dark brown or black velvety body. Characteristically dark abdomen and yellow tipped legs. Smaller than the native European Hornet.

Introduced to France in 2004 where it has spread rapidly. A number of sightings have been recorded in the UK since 2016. High possibility of introduction through, for example, soil associated with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden items (furniture, plant pots), freight containers, in vehicles, or in/on untreated timber. The possibility that it could fly across the Channel has not been ruled out.

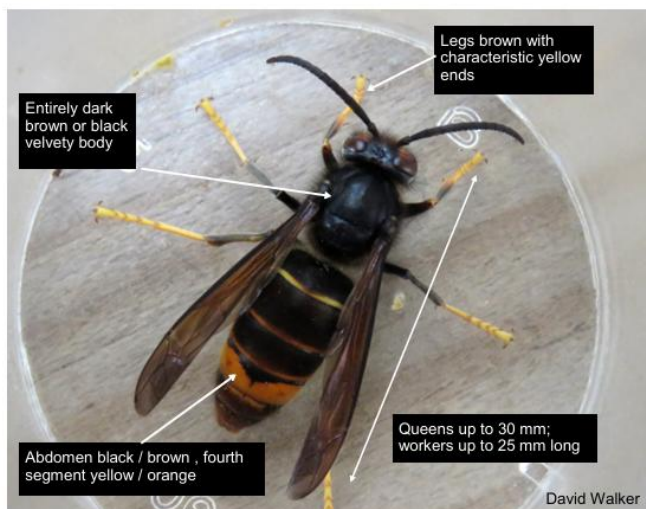
A highly aggressive predator of native insects. Poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators.

Do not disturb an active nest. Members of the public who suspect they have found a yellow-legged hornet should report it with a photo using the details provided in the red box at the top of this ID sheet.

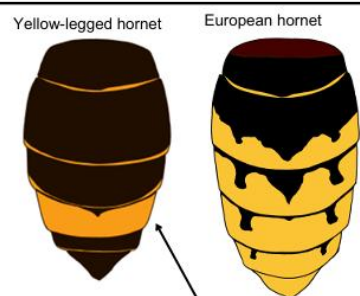


David Walker

Key ID Features



David Walker



Yellow-legged hornet abdomen is almost entirely dark except for 4th abdominal segment.



J. Haxaire

Version 6. Produced by Lucy Cornwell, Olaf Booy (NNSS), Gay Marris, Mike Brown (National Bee Unit) with assistance from Colette O'Flynn (National Biodiversity Data Centre Ireland) Stuart Roberts (BWARS)

Yellow-legged hornet, aka Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) for comparison

- Queen up to 30mm long, worker up to 25mm long
- Legs yellow at the ends
- Dark brown / black abdomen with a yellow / orange band on 4th segment
- Head dark from above, orange from front
- Dark coloured antennae
- Entirely black velvety thorax
- Never active at night

Actual size



Q. Rome

Similar Species**European hornet (*Vespa crabro*)**

- Queen up to 35mm long, worker up to 30mm long
- Legs brown at the ends
- Yellow abdomen marked with brown on the upper part, not banded
- Head yellow from above, yellow from front
- Yellow antennae
- Thorax black with extensive brown markings
- May be active at night

Actual size



Roger Burgess

Mia Tonge, National Bee Unit

Giant woodwasp (*Urocerus gigas*)

- Larger than yellow-legged hornet, female up to 45mm long
- Legs yellow
- Distinctive yellow and black banded abdomen
- Long cylindrical body unlike yellow-legged hornet which has an obvious waist
- Long yellow antennae
- Female has an obvious long sting-like appendage (ovipositor) which it uses to lay eggs in trees

Actual size



Q. Rome

Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*)

- Abdomen has more yellow stripes than yellow-legged hornet
- Legs darker than yellow-legged hornets
- Only one pair of wings (hornets and wasps have two pairs)
- Large, globular eyes

Actual size



Didier Descouens

Alvesgaspar

Median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*)

- More extensive yellow and orange colouration on abdominal segments than yellow-legged hornet
- Yellow markings on thorax unlike yellow-legged hornet

Actual size (queen pictured)



Rasbak

Rasbak

Field Signs

Active April-November (peak August/September). Mated queens over winter singly or in groups, in various natural and man-made harbourages – underneath tree bark in cavities left by beetle larvae, in soil, on ceramic plant pots – potentially any small, well-insulated refuge. Makes very large nests in tall trees in urban and rural areas, but avoids pure stands of conifers. Will use man made structures (garages, sheds etc.) as nesting sites.

**For more information visit:**

www.nonnativespecies.org
www.nationalbeeunit.com

Alert! Report sightings of this species:

- with the iPhone and Android recording app: **Asian Hornet Watch**
- online at: www.nonnativespecies.org/yellowleggedhornet
- by email: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk



June in the apiary Main Actions (Courtesy of BBKA - posted on Facebook 1st June 2025)

Swarm prevention and control

Colonies continue to be at high risk of swarming

Continue inspecting most colonies every 5-7 days

Swarming

Have swarm collection equipment ready

Add brood space and supers as required before hives get congested

Honey

Remove any sealed honey frames/supers for extraction

Replace supers with spares during flow

Extract/Jar up Oilseed rape honey before it sets

Honey storage is best in very full food grade plastic storage buckets

Store ideally in a dark, cool, dry environment

Getting a nuc

Optimum makeup - Laying queen – 3 frames brood – 4 frames bees – stores – healthy

Feeding

Watch for the June gap in forage (It can have a sudden major impact especially on small colonies).

Feed if required - avoid sugar syrup stored as honey

Pests and Disease

Do a Varroa check

Watch for any Deformed Wing Virus

An average daily drop of 10+ per day is the treatment threshold in June

Plan late summer varroa treatment and buy in supplies

Other - Cut back weeds growing in front of entrances.

Wiltshire Honeybee Health Day: Saturday 28th June 2025 - 9.30-4.30

Market Lavington Community Hall, Saint Mary's Road,

Market Lavington

SN10 4DG

Tickets to Wiltshire members are FREE. First come, first served.

This is an amazing opportunity to see AFB and EFB up close; an opportunity to come away with tons of new insight and knowledge about bee diseases.

Would you be able to recognise the signs of American Foulbrood (AFB) or European Foulbrood (EFB) in your colonies? Spotting the telltale signs is one of the crucial parts of our weekly beekeeping inspections during the spring and summer months.

Wiltshire Honeybee Health Day, run in conjunction with the National Bee Unit, is designed to help beekeepers better understand the threat of honeybee diseases and what to do if they manifest in your hive. The day will give beekeepers an opportunity to handle frames infected with AFB and EFB and learn more about honeybee health.

Tickets are available on a first come first served basis from here: <https://bit.ly/hbt2806>

Spaces are limited and so book now.

Bring your own lunch. Teas and coffees available.

Important Message: Honey labelling at Wiltshire BKA shows and events.

“Every year at the Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day there are disagreements with people wishing to sell their honey at WBA shows and events – over the use of incorrect labels.

So, consultation with Wiltshire Trading Standards have resulted in proposal of guidelines for everyone to follow at ANY of the events where we represent Wiltshire BKA include sales of honey at fetes and fairs.

These rules will also be used for shows in classes where own labels are used.

If we all follow the same advice maybe the poor people manning the stands won't spend hours arguing with BKA suppliers.

Find the guidelines under Education on the WBKA website.

<https://www.wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk/honey-labelling-guidelines/>



Provisional dates for the club apiary sessions 2025.

How did it come to be June already! We had a spell of cooler wet weather towards the end of May, but we are back to the warmth again. Please remember that the dates below are dependent upon the state of the bees, and the weather etc... so watch out for additional messages.

These dates are, as always, provisional. If the weather isn't good enough to open the hives, dates might be cancelled, sometimes at short notice. If for any reason sessions are cancelled, a mailshot will be sent out and the club webpage will be updated. Our plans are to open on the following dates:

7th June

21st June

5th July

19th July

2nd August

16th August

30th August

13th September

Come and join us, we're looking forward to welcoming you to the apiary, finding out how your bees are faring, and working with our bees together.

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



Honey Recipe of the month – June

Tangy lemon curd – delicious on scones, use it to sandwich a Victoria sponge together for a change – or just have it on your bread and butter!

Honey Lemon Curd Courtesy of Yorkshire beekeepers – you can find this recipe on the internet - [nbka_honey_lemon_curd_example_recipe.pdf](#)

Ingredients

113g (4oz) unsalted Butter

340g (12oz) clear Honey

4 Eggs (original size 3)(~ medium), lightly beaten

60g (2oz) granulated Sugar

Grated rind zest and juice of 3 Lemons

Method

1. Put the honey, sugar, butter, lemon rind and juice in the top of a double saucepan or a bowl placed over simmering water.
2. Stir until sugar and butter is melted. Sieve to remove all the bits and strands and return mixture. Beat the medium sized eggs into the mixture and continue cooking until it begins to thicken and coat the back of a spoon.
3. Pour into a warmed 454g (1lb) honey jar.
4. Whilst still warm, seal jar with either a cellophane top or a lid.



Three impressive photos showing the installation of the new storage unit at the club apiary site, (courtesy of Dan Young)



Pollinator of the month – June...

Have you noticed the Cinnabar moth in the fields gardens and hedgerows? Their pinky-red and black colour makes them very noticeable.

Cinnabar moths start life as yellow and black caterpillars and are particularly fond of munching on ragwort plants. Their bright colours warn predators that they're poisonous, but they only build up their poison after feeding on the ragwort. The caterpillars spend the winter as cocoons on the ground before emerging as moths in the summer. Cinnabar moths can be seen flying during the day and night and are often mistaken for butterflies.

The cinnabar is slate-black with two red spots and two pinky-red stripes on the rounded forewings. Its hindwings are pinky-red and bordered with black. It can be distinguished from the similar burnet moths by its broader wings and red bars instead of spots.

The Cinnabar moth is found all over UK – it is named after the red mineral, Cinnabar, an ore of the metal Mercury.



Interesting articles for you might like to read....

Have you read the National Bee Unit Drone brood removal for Varroa control August 2024 – you can read the full advice sheet by using the following link.....

[https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/assets/PDFs/3 Resources for beekeepers/Fact Sheets/Fact_26_Using_Drone_Brood_Removal_as_a_Varroa_Control.pdf](https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/assets/PDFs/3%20Resources%20for%20beekeepers/Fact%20Sheets/Fact_26_Using_Drone_Brood_Removal_as_a_Varroa_Control.pdf)

Another interesting read is the article on the use of the refractometer (Honey Refractometer – All You Need to Know - By [Hanna Bäckmo](#) on September 13, 2023) – now seems a suitable time to be talking of such things (listening to other bee keepers it seems as though there are pleasing honey harvests taking place). You can read the full article on the internet by using the following link....

[Honey Refractometer - All You Need to Know - Hanna's Bees](#)



Swindon Branch is hosting a talk on 26 June at 7.30pm

to be given by Andy Pedley on the subject of ***Food Safety for the Beekeeper*** and would like to extend the invitation to all WBKA members. Please see the message below:

Swindon Club has arranged for Andy Pedley to come and talk to us on 26.6.25 and we would like to invite all members of WBKA to come and join us.

We meet at the The Tawny Owl Pub (Parliament Room), Taw Hill, Swindon SN25 1WR

Please try to car share wherever possible as parking is limited. We will start promptly at 7:30pm.

Any queries please email Kathy Hobson at admin@sdbka.co.uk

Andy has been keeping bees for more than 30 years, and as an EHO developed an interest in the law on food safety as it applies to bee keepers and honey production about 15 years ago, realising that there was a fair amount of misinformation and traditional, but not always good, practice, among bee keepers. In 2009, he authored a series in BeeCraft on the Food Safety Legislation and has authored other relevant articles for them too – on the Honey Regulations and Recycling jars.

He's recently worked more on the nuts and bolts of food safety for bee keepers, and has presented talks on this, as well as Food Safety law as it applies to bee keepers at the National Honey Show workshops and to local associations. Northern Bee Books asked him to produce a book, and this is now in print . The book deals with many aspects of Food (and other product) safety for bee keepers producing honey and compound foods such as Infusions.

(Food Safety for the Beekeeper talk at Swindon contd.)

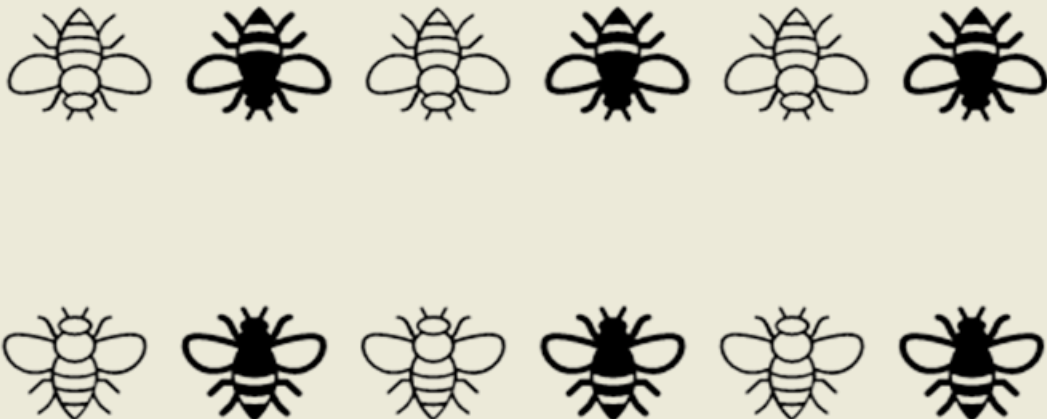
Most recently he's dealt with the ruling on raw honey, and labelling, in BBKA News.

There's a recent article on Weights and Measures too.

Andy is currently the Training Apiary Manager for Oxfordshire BKA; this gives him responsibility for 10 colonies there as well as his own 8 in 2 apiaries.

The talk will be on Food Safety for the Beekeeper and Andy will deal with the practical side of food safety as it applies to bee keepers, from the hive right through harvest and sale. He'll deal with compound foods and allergens.

This is a ticketed event so please ensure you get your free tickets in advance [here](#).



Club members had a worrying email from Nina Wilton recently – here is a reminder of the content

“We have just been notified of an outbreak of European Foul Brood (EFB) in Frome. Given the proximity of this outbreak to West Wiltshire, this is a reminder of what to look for when doing a disease inspection, with a particular focus on EFB, and what steps to take if you suspect an outbreak in your apiary.

EFB is a bacterium that infects the gut of honey bee brood. It can be detected before the brood is sealed. Infected larvae lose their pearly white colour – the multiplication of bacteria in the larval gut turn the larvae a creamy colour. Infected larvae will also lose their clear segmentation and their characteristic C shape – they may appear to be twisted in the cell and look as if they're melted.

Dead infected larvae become brown in colour, then dry out and form a rubbery brown scale that is easily removed from the cell. Some larvae may be capped over before dying, in which case the nurse bees might detect the dead larva and investigate, leaving perforated cell cappings. In heavy infestations the brood pattern will become spotty.

How to conduct an EFB inspection

At the beginning of an EFB infestation only a few larvae will be affected, but the disease spreads extremely fast once it takes hold. It's therefore essential to be thorough in your inspection to make sure you notice any early signs of disease.

In order to do that, shake the bees off the brood frame so that you can see all the brood. Check all the cells for any signs of infection – open cells for distorted or dead larvae, capped cells for signs of perforated cappings.

(EFB outbreak guidelines and advice contd.)What to do if you see EFB symptoms

Control of EFB is subject to the Bee Diseases and Pests Control (England) Order 2006, and all suspected outbreaks must, by law, be notified straight away to the National Bee Unit. Our regional bee inspector is Daniel Etheridge – daniel.etheridge@apha.gov.uk

If you suspect your bees have EFB, close down the hive and make sure you thoroughly disinfect all of your equipment before working on any other colonies in your apiary. After notifying the NBU of a suspected case of EFB you will be visited by a bee inspector, who will test for the disease and, if it is confirmed, work with you to decide the best course of action to control the outbreak.

Do not remove any bees, equipment, or honey from your apiary until you have confirmation from the bee inspector either that your bees are not infected or that any outbreak has been controlled.

Please don't visit the club apiary or any other club members' apiaries if you suspect that your bees have been infected until you receive the "all clear" from the regional bee inspector. For more information about EFB and other notifiable bee diseases, please go to BeeBase <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/diseases-and-pests/foulbroods-notifiable> where you will find reliable information about what to look out for and how to respond to a suspected outbreak".

Nina Wilton



Nice to see you!

Great to meet our local Thorne's representative on 24th May at the apiary – give Diane a call if you need apiary supplies – number and details on the last page of the newsletter.



Plant of the month - June

Have you noticed the Red Campion in flower on roadside verges?

The flowers of red campion are important for various pollinating insects, including bees, butterflies, and hoverflies.

Common names: red campion, adder's flower, Robin Hood, cuckoo flower

Scientific name: *Silene dioica*

Family: Caryophyllaceae

Origin: native

Flowering season: May to September

Habitat: woodland, grassland, urban areas



[Red campion \(*Silene dioica*\) - Woodland Trust](#)

This month I am including the cotoneaster – I have noticed it to be smothered with honey bees – very noisy! The flowers are modest – but perhaps popular with the honey bee because they are of a suitable shape and size for them to footage on. Cotoneaster horizontalis is a low growing, spreading, deciduous shrub to 90cm tall and 1.5m in width, with distinctive, flat, herringbone patterned sprays of foliage bearing small glossy dark green leaves that turn orange and red in autumn. The pink-tinged white flowers in late spring are followed by red berries.



The Royal Bath and West Show 2025 Thursday 29th May to Saturday 31st May 2025

Did you enter any of the Bee and Honey classes at the Royal Bath and West Show? I hope that you were successful.

Members put in an enormous number of hours work preparing exhibits for the show – sadly, in spite of this, I believe Wiltshire lost their bid to retain the County Shield by 3 points.

In spite of the indication that the results for 2025 are to be found on the internet, a search has not found them. So – the newsletter this month will just show the few photos that have been shared with the newsletter – maybe next month we will be able to list some of the winners.



Have you got any more photos of exhibits or from the “Bees and Honey Marquee” at the Royal Bath and West Show? Please send them to the editor so they can be included in the newsletter for July – address at the end of the newsletter.



DON'T FORGET!

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



Wiltshire Beekeepers
West Wiltshire
Beekeepers Association
Unisex Polo Top

£16.19



Wiltshire Beekeepers
West Wiltshire
Beekeepers Association
Unisex Sweatshirt

£25.79



Wiltshire Beekeepers
West Wiltshire
Beekeepers Association
Cap

£10.19



Wiltshire Beekeepers
West Wiltshire
Beekeepers Association
Unisex Fleece

£33.79

An ideal birthday gift for your nearest and dearest?

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-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