

West Wilts BKA News

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



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**Good to know – interesting items, news,
and reports** page 3 to 18

On the left – Honeybee foraging on
Perovskia – otherwise known as “Russian
Sage”.

Here we are in the month of October, I am sure that your preparations for overwintering your hives are well underway, though who knows what the weather will be like in the lead up to the winter!.

Were you successful with your entries to the club show? You have more opportunities to show your exhibits at the County Show in Devizes on October 10th – you can make entries until noon on 5th October – see page 4 – there will be interesting talks for you to attend.. <https://www.wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk/events/wiltshire-bee-honey-day/>

DIARY OF EVENTS



OCTOBER

October 10th 10am to 4pm Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day, The Devizes Corn Exchange, Market Place, Devizes SN10 1HS.

October 20th : 'Planning & Reflection' with Kathy Lovegrove. Zoom link:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYMZxTlmJjpRCLJjYjvblxgybQQdSZ.1>
Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 Passcode: 527929

October 22nd - 24th The National Honey Show, Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, UK.

NOVEMBER

November 7th "Meet-ups" recommence at Thoulstone Pavillion at 12 noon.

November 17th BBKA lecture - website currently offers Adam Leitch 7pm

November 23rd WWBKA Annual General Meeting at 7pm at Heywood and Hawkeridge Village Hall, Heywood. BA13 4LP

DECEMBER

December 15th BBKA lecture – website currently advertises 7pm 'Food Safety Legislation and How It Applies to the Beekeeper' with Andy Pedley



Good to Know

Forthcoming vacancies arising at County level...

Wiltshire Beekeepers Association (WBKA) will be looking to fill the following vacancies on the management board at the WBKA AGM on 26 January 2027:

Treasurer - Trustee and Officer

Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM) Delegate - Postholder

South West Beekeeping Forum (SWBKF) Delegate - Postholder

If you feel one of these roles might be of interest and would like more information, please email in the first instance Amanda, WBKA Secretary, for more details:

secretary@wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk



A REMINDER TO JOIN BEEBASE

The National Bee Unit is vital in the control of infection and sharing of resources. Registration with the National Bee unit means if there is an outbreak of disease in your area you will be alerted.

The National Bee Unit runs an apiary inspection programme; the NBU inspectorate is made up of a network of fully trained Bee Inspectors.

BeeBase is full of useful information on many topics of bee husbandry including how to manage pests and diseases and the best practices that should be observed for successful beekeeping.

The NBU is a recognised centre of excellence in the provision of advice and research in bee health.

Follow the link to the National Bee Unit to find out more <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/#>







WILTSHIRE BEE & HONEY DAY

2026

**ENTRY:
FREE**
No tickets
required.


SATURDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2026


10AM TO 4PM

A fantastic day out for people thinking about taking up beekeeping, as well as old hands who want to learn a whole lot more.

Incorporates the County Honey Show.



SEATING IN TALKS:
FIRST COME,
FIRST SEATED.





LOCATION:
**THE DEVIZES
CORN EXCHANGE**
Market Place,
Devizes SN10 1HS.

ACTIVITIES ON THE DAY INCLUDE...

 TALKS INCLUDING "Thinking of becoming a beekeeper?" "How to get started"	 CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES INCLUDING CANDLE ROLLING	 EXPLORING INSIDE A VIRTUAL HIVE
 HONEY BEER COURTESY OF WADWORTH BREWERY	 MEAD TASTING	 EXHIBITORS OFFERING BEE RELATED FOOD, DRINKS, GIFTS AND PRODUCTS AS WELL AS BEEKEEPING KIT.



MEMBER OF ELEVION GROUP

SUPPORTED BY





Photo: Stephen Richards. "Corn Exchange, Devizes" (Geograph 2279323), licensed CC BY-SA 2.0.

Are you preparing exhibits for the Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day?

Check and see whether the exhibits you entered for the

West Wiltshire Club show

fulfil requirements for the

Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2026

Saturday, 10th October – 10am to 4pm

The Devizes Corn Exchange, Market Place, Devizes SN10 1HS.



We need as many entries as possible in our quest to retain the Applegate

Trophy – awarded to the Branch with the most points - can you help?

.

The opportunity is open to volunteers and show entrants to sell their honey at the show.

There's still time to volunteer to help on the day please email Sophie Butcher with offers of help at chair@wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk



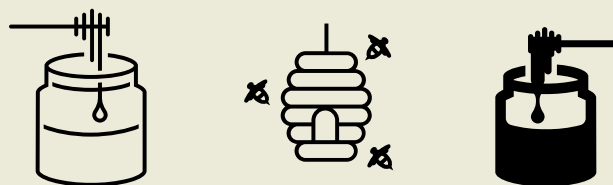


Apiary club honey is available for sale

in

15lb and 30lb buckets at £6 per lb

Also, 1lb labelled jars for £8



Yellow Legged Asian Hornet (YLAH) update – (report courtesy of Tom Kenyon).

In terms of Year to Date (YTD) figures, last year, the NBU recorded Yellow-legged hornet 2025 rolling update » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase 544 credible sightings including 163 nests.

To date, this year (16th Sep-26), 66 nests have been discovered. Yellow-legged hornet 2026 rolling update » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase. This is compared to 117 nests by the same date, last year. This is good news and may be attributed to the rising tide of YLAH awareness. Or it may be explained by a later spring. Please note that for some reason, the Street nest in Somerset (early Aug) has yet to be recorded on the BeeBase rolling update.

Where are we now?

With the exception of Wrexham (05/01/26), the last nest found last season, was at Swyre (Dorset) on 19/11/25. This is one of four found in November 2025. We must keep monitoring until the end of November.

Nests are likely to be at their largest (2-3,000) in late October. Now that the Ivy is largely over, the YLAH may move on to our hives. Like wasps, which have almost disappeared around me, YLAH queens are laying fewer eggs, and the workers are craving sugars that are excreted from the reducing number of larvae. This worker/larvae imbalance encourages the workers to hunt for sugars (at our hives). Please stay vigilant. Earlier in September, the YLAH queens will lay drone hornets and a couple of weeks later virgin (Gyne) hornets. They emerge in November, a couple of weeks apart – to avoid getting pointy-head baby hornets!!! Please stay vigilant!

(YLAH Update)

Please stay vigilant!

Please stay vigilant and keep visiting your hives. Please make sure you have the Asian Hornet Watch App. Please send me your what 3 words to record your monitoring activity for the NBU. Please keep looking up into the tree canopy – when you are walking the dog. – Especially now the leaves are beginning to turn and fall.

Any questions – please give me a call 07967 552025 or email tomkenyon@tegk.co.uk

Congratulations to all the successful candidates who passed BBKA practical exams during the summer.

You have been contacted by email, asking you to provide details of obtaining a rebate of your exam fees.

It has not been possible to use all the photos sent to the editor in this edition of the branch newsletter

but....

sincere thanks to all those who sent photos taken at the
West Wiltshire Branch Honey Show 2026



West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association Show

RESULTS 2026



West Wiltshire Branch Honey Show 2026

CLASS		FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
1	Beginner's class one jar		Jan Mojsa	
2	Young member one jar			
3	One jar light	Chris Rawlings	Alan Ridout	Ruth Watt
4	One jar med	Paul Marchant	Alex Sparke	Daniel Young
5	One jar dark	Ruth Watt	Chris Rawlings	Donald Watt
6	Two matched jars	Chris Rawlings	Ruth Watt	Donald Watt
7	One jar soft set	Chris Rawlings	Alan Ridout	Alex Sparke
8	One jar chunk	Elaine Irvine	Daniel Young	
9	'Black jar'	Elaine Irvine	Chris Rawlings	Alex Sparke
10	One section in case. (round or square)	Elaine Irvine		
11	Cut comb	Elaine Irvine		
12	Frame of honey for extraction	Andrea Stickells	Liz Gwinnell	Elaine Irvine
13	Dry mead	Donald Watt	Elaine Irvine	
14	Sweet Mead	Chris Rawlings	Donald Watt	Elaine Irvine
15	Melomel	Alan Ridout	Chris Rawlings	Elaine Irvine
16	Metheglin	Chris Rawlings	Alan Ridout	Elaine Irvine



17	Cyser	Elaine Irvine	Alan Ridout	Chris Rawlings
18	Polish	Jan Mojsa	Daniel Young	Chris Rawlings
19	Beeswax min 227g	Donald Watt	Ruth Watt	Daniel Young
20	3 wax blocks	Alan Ridout	Liz Gwinnell	Andrew Stickells
21	Pair dipped or moulded	Donald Watt	Chris Rawlings	Daniel Young
22	Pair of rolled & decorated	Liz Gwinnell	Daniel Young	
23	Display flowers	Sue Rawlings	Daniel Young	
24	1-5 Stems Flowers	Daniel Young		
25	Two wraps	Ruth Watt	Liz Gwinnell	Jan Mojsa
26	Display of six products			
27	Artistic exhibit	Liz Gwinnell		
28	Beeswax model	Chris Rawlings	Daniel Young	
29	Honey cake	Sue Rawlings	Amanda Leworthy	Alan Ridout
30	Six honey biscuits	Amanda Leworthy		
31	Photo - Bees/Flowers			
32	Photo Aspects of beekeeping	Elaine Irvine		

Kate Forbes Trophy for the most points by a member with less than two years beekeeping experience
Jan Mojsa

Dick Mills Rosebowl for the most points in Classes 1 to 12
Elaine Irvine, Chris Rawlings

Chairman's Cup for the Best Exhibit in Class 6
Chris Rawlings

Sister Lucy Cup for the most points in Classes 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 28

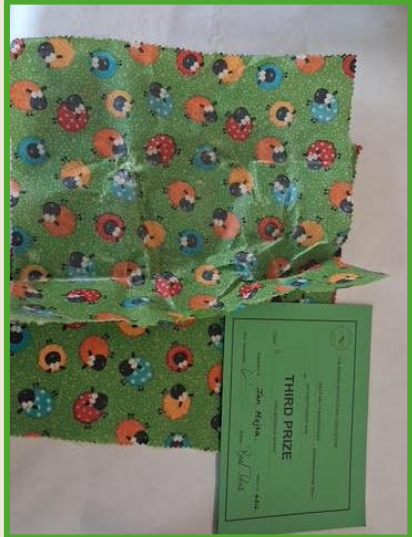
Daneil Young

Aldo Cup for the best exhibit in Class 29
Sue Rawlings

Walt Conway Cup to be awarded to the competitor with the most points from all classes
Chris Rawlings

Geraldine Lenert Excellence Award for best show exhibit
Chris Rawlings – Rose Petal Metheglin





Flower of the month, October: Ivy

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/plants/wild-flowers/ivy/>



According to the website cited above, *Hedera helix* and *Hedera hibernica* are “clingy, luscious and misunderstood!” I think it likely beekeepers recognise the tell-tale bundles of golden pollen the honeybees collect between September and November, as well as the distinct aroma it brings to the hives. Not only are honeybees attracted to flowering ivy, but ivy is also said to support “at least 50 species of wildlife”. The Yellow Legged Asian Hornet might be found feeding on the ivy – so keep a lookout. Ivy is an evergreen, woody climber, sometimes growing to a height of 30m. There are two different forms – juvenile and mature. Two native species of ivy can be found in the UK: *Hedera helix* and *Hedera hibernica*. *H. helix* is the common ivy, found throughout the UK. *H. hibernica*, the Atlantic ivy, is more common in the west of Britain and in Ireland. Both species can climb, but there is a cultivar of *H. hibernica* called 'Hibernica' which grows along the ground and does not usually climb. This cultivar is often planted as ground cover and can become invasive..



October honey recipe: Honey Oat Biscuits

Ingredients

100g unsalted butter softened

50g caster sugar or brown sugar

3 tablespoons runny honey

150g rolled oats

100g plain flour or self raising flour

Half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda

Pinch of sea salt



Method

1. Oven 180° C (160° C fan oven). Line baking tray with baking paper.
2. Mix softened butter and sugar together until smooth, then stir in the runny honey.
3. Add the oats, flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt until fully combined – mixing well to form a stiff, sticky dough.
4. Roll small pieces of dough into walnut size and place them well apart, flattening them slightly.
5. Bake for 10 – 12 minutes until they turn golden brown.
6. Cool biscuits on wire tray for 5- 10 minutes before storing.

Verdict! These biscuits were really quick and easy to make and very tasty. Not sure how long they will stay crispy – or maybe they won't last long enough for us to find out!

ANOTHER REMINDER!

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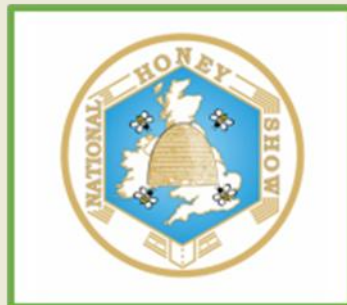
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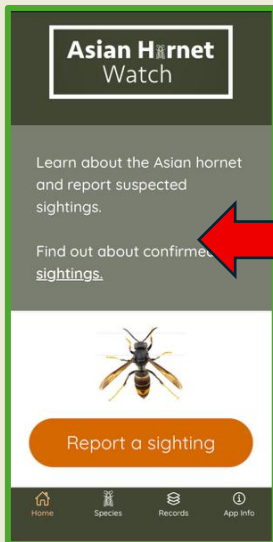


THE NATIONAL HONEY SHOW 2026

THURSDAY 22ND TO SATURDAY 24TH OCTOBER

SANDOWN PARK, ESHER, SURREY

Please submit any interesting photos and captions to newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com



**DON'T FORGET TO
DOWNLOAD
THE ASIAN HORNET WATCH APP
TO YOUR PHONE**



Save our Pollinators

You are making a difference!

Reports from the public are the cornerstone of work to eradicate

Yellow-legged Asian Hornet (YLAH).

Are your hives “winter ready”?

I expect beekeepers have well prepared their hives by now to go into the winter months. You can still buy fondant from Den our apiary manager. I think it likely varroa treatment of hives is completed by now, but have you fitted your mouse guards on yet? You can remind yourself about hive equipment cleaning by following the link below to the National Bee Unit Hive Cleaning and Sterilisation

https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/assets/PDFs/3_Resources_for_beekeepers/articles_reports/BKA_news/BKA_07_Hive_Cleaning_and_Sterilisation.pdf

After your autumn varroa treatments are completed you may be considering a mid-winter varroa treatment when colonies are brood-minimal/broodless. Reduction of entrances is another autumn activity you are likely to have already put in place to help defence and deter robbing. Freezing extracted hive frames for 48 hours may help reduce the potential of wax moths and using wire mesh at the top and bottom of frame stacks may reduce/prevent rodent damage.

Have you checked to ensure that your hives are dry and not draughty – with sound roofs and no leaks? Tilting hives slightly forward may prevent condensation pooling and rain ingress under the roof. Some beekeepers advise that above crownboard insulation helps to reduce heat loss and drip.

If your hives are in exposed area hives may benefit from being firmly secured over winter with ratchet straps, one over the roof and another under the floor/stand. Bricks or blocks may be used, some beekeepers in especially exposed areas may use windbreaks. Keeping a regular eye on your sites to check after a storm hardly needs mentioning.

October Pollinator of the month: the Ivy Bee (*Colletes Hedera*)



<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates/bees-and-wasps/ivy-bee>

Habitat – coastal - towns and gardens

It is likely many people reading this newsletter will be familiar with the Ivy Bee. Similar in appearance to a honey bee, it has an orangey-brown, hairy thorax, and distinct black and yellow stripes on its abdomen. The Ivy Bee is found in Southern England and Wales, and the Channel Islands. They feed mainly on ivy and time their emergence to fit in with the flowering period: late September to November.

The ivy bee was first recorded in Dorset UK in 2001. As suggested by its common name, Ivy is the main plant used by this bee for pollen. It is seen when ivy is in flower, from early September to early November. Ivy bees nest in loose, light, or sandy soil on southern-facing banks and cliffs with ivy nearby for foraging. They are solitary bees, but when conditions are suitable, there may be thousands of nests in the same area.



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

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
WWBKA Social Secretary: Social-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

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

Swarm Collection Register: Contact Branch Swarm Coordinator (David Raines 07711 018440 1373-825560 or David.Raines@hna.uk.com)

Find us on  :West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association