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 12

On the left – Honeybee foraging on an autumn dahlia.

Showtime is over! If you exhibited I hope you were successful. Perhaps you have benefitted from the process of planning and preparing, talking to other beekeepers with more experience, and the valuable feedback from the judges.

Without a dedicated area for show preparation, I am in the process of tidying away all equipment and putting everything away into boxes in the shed. This year the plan is to make an inventory of the contents before I put everything away, so I can more easily find what I need for exhibiting next year.

Since this is the last newsletter for 2026, (with the next issue planned for March 2027), I will take this opportunity to wish you a quiet winter, and a Happy Christmas. Best wishes from Elaine Mairis

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DIARY OF EVENTS



NOVEMBER

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

November 17th BBKA lecture 'Forage: why the what, how and when matters for a colony' Adam Leitch 7pm (more on page 3).

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



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Good to Know

BBKA November Talk

The next in the BBKA monthly series of Zoom talks is: 'Forage: why the what, how and when matters for a colony' with Adam Leitch on Tuesday 17th November at 7pm.

Adam Leitch is currently Treasurer and former Chairman of the National Diploma in Beekeepers (NDB), and a member of Reigate Beekeepers in Surrey. He passed his NDB exam in 2015, having already obtained his BBKA Master Beekeeper and Microscopy Certificate. He has taught practical and theory at all levels. He runs 10-20 colonies which fluctuates according to life outside beekeeping - mainly due to family & work commitments.

Zoomlink:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYMZxTImJjpRCLJjYjvblxgybQQdSZ.1

Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 Passcode: 527929

As usual, a recording of this talk will be available on the BBKA Member Hub at a later date for those unable to watch live.

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Winter Beekeeping Courses 2026/27 – 9 Regional UK Venues

Looking to sharpen your beekeeping skills before spring? BIBBA is hosting two one-day courses across nine UK locations on the same weekend, led by experienced tutors Karl Colyer and Roger Patterson:

"Early Years": Perfect if you've survived your first few seasons and want to move from reactive troubleshooting to managing your colonies with real understanding and confidence.

"Sustainable Bees & Queens for Everyone":

A wide-ranging day focusing on how to raise robust, gentle, locally adapted bees suited to our British climate - reducing the need for imports.

Venues, Details, Programme, and booking:

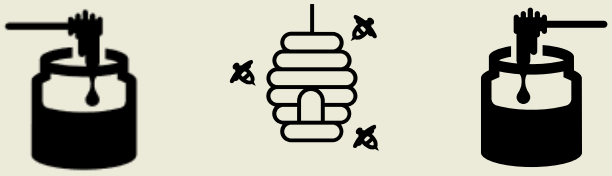
To find your nearest location and book your place, visit: https://bibba.com/

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Apiary club honey is available for sale in

15lb and **30lb buckets at £6 per lb**

Also, **1lb labelled jars for £8**



Please stay vigilant and keep visiting your hives and make sure you have the Asian Hornet Watch App.

Please ensure you have sent Tom Kenyon your "what 3 words" location to record your monitoring activity for the NBU. Keep looking up into the tree canopy for hornet nests – especially now the leaves are beginning to turn and fall.

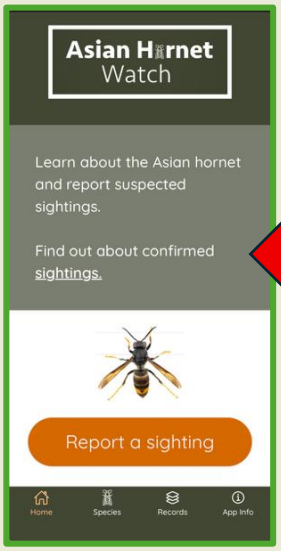
Any questions – please call Tom Kenyon 07967 552025 or email

tomkenyon@tegk.co.uk

and a reminder that Tom Kenyon will be happy to help with a YLAH Awareness presentation, if you know of a gardening club, school, or an area of local government who would benefit please pass on Tom's contact details –

Tom Kenyon ahat@wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk 07967 552025

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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).



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Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2026

Congratulations to all exhibitors –

a huge effort went into preparation and exhibiting

Follow the link below for a great range of photos of the event

https://www.wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk/events/wiltshire-bee-honey-day/

The Applegate Trophy, retained by West Wiltshire BKA for the branch with the most points, was accepted by WWBKA Chairman Danny Young





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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, (a recognised centre of excellence in research into bee health) is a vital resource 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 NBU inspectorate, made up of a network of fully trained Bee Inspectors, runs an apiary inspection programme.

Topics on successful beekeeping, including how to manage pests and diseases and best practices for successful beekeeping can be found on the website.

Follow the link to the National Bee Unit to find out more

https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/#

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Flower of the month, November: Michaelmas daisy, Aster novi-belgii



Michaelmas daisies provide a welcome end of season resource for insects. These plants are clump-forming, herbaceous perennials with narrow, lance-shaped mid-green to purple foliage. They have masses of daisy-like flowers in shades of purple, lavender-purple or white with yellow centres, which generally appear in the autumn. The height of this plant varies between 30cm and 180cm. Although powdery mildew is a problem with Michaelmas daisies, many cultivars are resistant to this.

Michaelmas daisies can be planted in most soils and enjoy full sun and partial shade.

https://www.rhsplants.co.uk/plants/_/aster--frikartii-mnch/classid.2571/

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November honey recipe: Honey Biscuits



Ingredients

100g softened unsalted butter

100g caster sugar

1 tablespoon runny honey

1 egg yolk

180g plain flour or self raising flour

1 teaspoon ground mixed spice

Method

1. Preheat oven to 175°C (fan-forced or gas equivalent) and lightly grease a baking tray.
2. Beat butter and caster sugar together in a bowl until pale and creamy.
3. Gently warm the honey until runny, then beat it into the butter-sugar mixture with the egg yolk.
4. Stir the mixed spice and self-raising flour, into butter, sugar, honey, egg yolk mixture, mixing gently until a soft dough forms.
5. Shape biscuits: roll dough into neat little balls (making about 30 cookies). Place them spaced apart on the greased baking tray.
6. Bake in the oven for about 10 minutes until lightly golden.
7. Cool on tray before transferring to a wire rack to firm up and finish cooling.

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November Pollinator of the month: Hummingbird hawk-moth (Macroglossum stellatarum)



This moth is a day-flying migrant visitor to the UK from Southern Europe and North Africa. It has greyish-brown forewings, bright orange hindwings, a greyish body, and a black-and-white chequered tail. It has a wingspan of about 5.0 to 5.8 cm (50–58 mm). The wings of this moth beat roughly 80 times per second, allowing it to hover motionless while feeding. It is said to produce an audible hum (though I haven't heard it myself). The Humming bird moth uses a long, straw-like proboscis to drink nectar from garden and wild flowers like buddleia, red valerian, salvias, and bedstraw.

This moth is typically seen from April to December, with peak activity through the summer months (such as July and August). Found widely spread across England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, it is often spotted in gardens, urban areas, coastal spots, and woodlands. During recent hot summers sightings have surged significantly.

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Beekeeping supplies.



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 or 01373-875465 or david.raines@hna.uk.com

Find us on : West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association

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