

News story: Asian hornet identified in Lancashire

The National Bee Unit has confirmed a sighting of the Asian hornet in the Bury area of Lancashire. It was spotted by a member of the public in a cauliflower, which has since been traced back to Boston.

The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than a bee. However, they do pose a risk to honey bees and work is already underway to identify any nests, which includes setting up a surveillance zone and traps in the two identified locations and deploying bee inspectors to visit local beekeepers.

This is the first confirmed sighting since last year, when a nest was discovered in Woolacombe in North Devon. [That Asian hornet incursion was successfully contained](#) by bee inspectors who promptly tracked down and destroyed the nest.

Nicola Spence, Defra Deputy Director for Plant and Bee Health, said:

While the Asian Hornet poses no greater risk to human health than a bee, we recognise the damage they can cause to honey bee colonies. That's why we are taking swift and robust action to locate and investigate any nests in the Bury and Boston areas following this confirmed sighting.

Following the successful containment of the Asian hornet incursion in North Devon last year, we have a well-established protocol in place to eradicate them and control any potential spread.

We remain vigilant across the country, working closely with the National Bee Unit and their nationwide network of bee inspectors.

Bee inspectors from APHA National Bee Unit will be carrying out surveillance and monitoring in a 1-2 km radius around the initial sighting. Additional monitoring and surveillance will be carried out in the Boston area where the cauliflower was grown.

If you suspect you have seen an Asian hornet you can report this using the iPhone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch' or by emailing alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk. [Identification guides and more information are available](#).

- The cost of eradication on private land will be met by APHA.
- Members of the public can also report sightings by email to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk with a photo or on the Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat website.
- At this time of year the hornet is likely to be a newly emerged queen

which is looking to establish a nest. If a nest was established last year it would have died out over winter.

- The Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat is a joint venture between Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government to tackle the threat of invasive species. More information can be found on their [website](#).
- For details on the appearance of an Asian hornet please can be found on [Bee Base](#) guide or the [non-native species identification guide](#).
- Photographs of the Asian hornet are available on our [Flickr account](#)

[News story: Programme: EU-UK Article 50 negotiations Brussels, 16-18 April 2018](#)

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[News story: Australian Air Force officer teams up with RAF to train Aerospace experts](#)

Squadron Leader Pete Mole is a Member of the Royal Australian Air Force, working in the UK as an RAF trainer

Pete is a specialist in GPS and navigation – a subject that has its roots in aerospace but is used by every part of Modern Defence operations. He teaches people from all over Defence, both military and civilian, about the complex workings of Aerospace technology.

Still a member of the Australian RAAF, Peteworks as part of a UK RAF team.

Training is very hands-on, with just a third of time spent in the classroom learning the theory, a third on a written thesis, and the last third devoted to visiting the industry to see new products in action.

This course requires a thorough understanding of the science behind the technology, but we also emphasise the importance of its practical use, to help make sure that our equipment is functional and fit for purpose. We try to demonstrate the very latest practices and developments so that people can compare what's on offer in the market, and determine the best choice of supplies for their organisation.

My students usually graduate into trials, procurement, test and evaluation jobs, so seeing what's in the pipeline and at the very cutting edge of modern technology helps prepare them for that.

Pete made his first trip to the UK with his wife in 2009 to study his Masters degree – an MSC in Aerospace Systems – in an exchange between his own service, the Royal Australian Air Force and their British counterparts.

I came to the UK because they're recognised as a top trainer around the world, so it was an easy choice.

Peter Mole with Staff, Students & Families at the Graduation of No. 48 Aerosystems Course, College Hall, RAF Cranwell

When he qualified, Pete returned to Australia, and spent the next four years on the frontline testing RAAF aircraft systems.

Among other things, I worked on a team developing countermeasures in aircraft – mechanisms that can be used to protect the aircraft and pilot against enemy attack whilst in flight. And I was deployed to Afghanistan to test how new equipment would function on the ground.

My job was to make sure that the equipment we wanted was fit for purpose. Creating useful equipment in a lab or a factory is only half the battle. If it doesn't work in the environments it's designed for, with all the extra challenges they bring, then it's not a useful tool for the men and women who are expected to use it day to day.

But Pete and his wife had loved their time in the UK. So when the opportunity arose for Pete to return in 2016 as an Aerospace trainer they both jumped at the chance.

I'm giving back to the course that shaped my career. I love being

able to pass on my knowledge and front line experience – I've put my skills to use in Australia and around the world, so I know what it's like to do the job and now I'm teaching the next generation.

When my students graduate they are specialists who understand the inner workings and use of very complex equipment – so they're in high demand. Members of the Armed Forces find that when they become veterans, the Aerospace industry are snapping them up!

Pete loves being in England and teaching with the RAF – but he still works for the Royal Australian Air Force and keeps strong links with his Australian colleagues – part of his job to act as an interface between the Australian Air Force and the British Air Force.

Reflecting on his Commonwealth roots he said:

There's a large group of Australians on exchange here at and when I was working at the Air Warfare school recently it was completely normal to see one or two international students being trained by UK military.

My Aussie colleagues and I hosted an Australia day function earlier this year. It was great to see lots of people from the UK and from other nations getting into the spirit of it. And the international links go much further than the Commonwealth, with Pete gaining extra benefits from the UK's reputation for first class training.

Working here as an adopted Brit and representing the RAAF opens a lot of doors with other European countries such as the Danish, French, Estonians and Latvia – who I wouldn't be able to build a relationship with if I were based in Australia. There's a huge amount of international co-operation when it comes to purchasing equipment and finding the best way to use them on operations, so every little helps.

My course only teaches 16 people a year so it's a close-knit community. One of my former students is now testing Australian Navy equipment, and many are working out in the industry bodies they visited when they were qualifying. They're now feeding back to me from the other side of the fence!

[Speech: Nerve agent attack in](#)

Salisbury, Wiltshire: UK statement to the OSCE, 12 April 2018

Mr Chairman,

A month ago, on 15 March, [I tabled at the Permanent Council](#) the attack in Salisbury, Wiltshire, involving an undeclared, Russian developed nerve-agent.

As a courtesy to participating States, I would like to update the Council on this attempted assassination that left Sergey Skripal, his daughter Yulia and a British police officer hospitalised and in a critical condition.

Thankfully DS Bailey has now been discharged from hospital and the Skripals' health is improving.

A painstaking and thorough UK investigation continues, working to identify the individuals involved in carrying out this attack and to establish potential criminal liability under the UK's 1996 Chemical Weapons Act.

In accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) [deployed a team to the UK](#) to collect environmental samples and to observe the taking of biomedical samples. These samples were sent to independent OPCW designated laboratories for analysis, in order to confirm the identity of the chemical involved.

The [OPCW has now finalised its report](#), distributed it to States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and published its Executive Summary of that report. I quote:

- the results of analysis of biomedical samples...demonstrate the exposure of the three hospitalised individuals to this toxic chemical
- the results of analysis of environmental samples....confirm the presence of this toxic chemical
- the results of analysis...confirm the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical

and:

- the toxic chemical was of high purity

The name and structure of that identified toxic chemical is contained in the full classified report to States Parties.

Mr Chairman, I will remind the Council of the reasons for the UK government's conclusion that it was highly likely that the Russian State was culpable for

this attack. These include:

- identification of the Russian-developed nerve agent
- the knowledge that the Russian Federation has produced this undeclared agent within the last 10 years, retains the capability to produce it and has investigated ways of delivering nerve agents, it is likely, for use in assassinations
- Russia's record of state sponsored assassinations
- statements, including by the Russian President, indicating that certain people are seen as legitimate targets

Also for clarity, and for the benefit of our Russian colleagues, I will explain why we use the phrase 'highly likely'. This is because in the UK it is for a Court of Law to deliver a final verdict on responsibility for a criminal offence.

The use of an illegal nerve agent in a British city was a reckless act carried out without regard to the indiscriminate public health consequences. The UK has repeatedly asked the Russian Federation for a credible explanation of how a nerve agent came to be used on the streets of Salisbury, and to disclose the Novichok programme to the OPCW.

What happened in Salisbury contravenes every rule in the international book, including the Chemical Weapons Convention and the fundamental tenets of the OSCE. This was a premeditated attack on the international rules-based order, and therefore, a challenge to us all.

Mr Chairman, this organisation knows better than any other about a pattern of Russian behaviour that seeks to undermine stability and democracy in our region in violation of international commitments and contrary to the principles of co-operation and common security. This is a pattern of disregard for sovereignty and territorial integrity, of attempts to damage the integrity of democratic institutions and the cohesion of democratic society, of cyber-attacks and of industrial scale disinformation that cynically seeks to mislead, distract and confuse.

I wish to thank so many colleagues and partners for the support of their capitals over the past few weeks. The strength of international reaction to what happened in Salisbury – including the largest expulsion of Russian intelligence operatives in history – sends a message that states are ready to stand up for shared principles and for common security; that attempts to undermine our region's stability and security have costs; that enough is enough.

Mr Chairman, on 15 March our distinguished Russian colleague asked 'who benefits'?

The answer is clear: no-one benefits. Not the people of Salisbury, who have faced serious risk and disruption. Not the UK government, dealing with the unprecedented use of an illegal nerve agent on British soil. Not the Russian people. Nor even, I would suggest, the Russian state, unprepared for the strength and resolve of the international reaction.

I do not believe any state seeks or enjoys confrontation with Russia or wants to throw away relationships and co-operation developed here and elsewhere over the past 30 years. Our challenge in the OSCE is to persuade our Russian colleagues to break the present cycle of disruption and destabilisation, and to rebuild trust through a return to respect for shared commitments.

[News story: Lord Duncan learns of challenges and opportunities at Dounreay](#)

Lord Duncan travelled to Caithness to learn more about work on Scotland's largest nuclear clean-up and demolition project. Located in the far north of Scotland, Dounreay employs around 1,200 staff and a similar number of people through the supply chain.

From the mid-1950s, Dounreay was the UK's centre of research into fast reactors until 1994. The experimental nature of these now-redundant facilities, poses some complex decommissioning challenges that continue to require technological innovation and excellence.

Lord Duncan visits Dounreay Prototype Fast Reactor (PFR) and Dounreay

The NDA spends more than £177 million a year to decommission Dounreay. A significant part of this is spent in the local economy. NDA works in partnership, through the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (CNSRP), to support the local community and manage the impact of the future closure of the Dounreay nuclear site.

On learning more about the challenges and opportunities faced at the site and in the local communities, Lord Duncan said:

It was fascinating to see first-hand the decommissioning of Dounreay and meet the men and women behind the work.

I was impressed with the site's commitment to safety, as well as the considerable investment the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Dounreay are making in the local community.

[Introduction to Dounreay](#)