



Beekeeper Exchange in Ashford

28th German–English Beekeeper Exchange



This year, the time had come once again: the beekeeper exchange with the Beekeepers Association Ashford in the county of Kent took place for the 28th time. On this occasion, beekeepers from the district of Euskirchen travelled to England. The first evening was spent with the host families, enjoying dinner together and catching up on the latest news.

Friday's program featured a visit to Dover Castle. Perched high above the famous White Cliffs of Dover, the fortress offers a commanding view across the English Channel. A military installation already existed here during Roman times. The main structure of the castle as we know it today was built in the 12th century under King Henry II. Particularly iconic is the imposing Great Tower at the heart of the complex. Beneath the castle lies an extensive network of secret tunnels, which served as a command center and hospital during the Second World War. Today, visitors can explore historical rooms, medieval walls, and the underground passages.



Figure 1 Dover Castle

Saturday began bright and early. At nine o'clock, our bus set off for the Royal Botanic Gardens in Wakehurst, located in the English county of West Sussex.

The site is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and serves both research and conservation purposes. Wakehurst spans vast woodlands, lakes, and beautifully maintained garden landscapes.



Figure 2 Wakehurst

Our guide Eddie led us through the grounds and explained the remarkable diversity within the oak family. Wakehurst is especially renowned for its seasonal blooms and vibrant, colorful scenery.



Figure 3 Wakehurst

The grounds are also home to the famous Millennium Seed Bank, dedicated to the preservation of plant seeds. The historic manor house at the center of the estate dates back to the 16th century. Numerous paths wind through natural woodland areas with ancient trees and tranquil bodies of water.



Figure 4 Wakehurst

Sunday was all about relaxation. A self organized barbecue in the afternoon marked the pleasant conclusion of this enjoyable weekend. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Morrison family for hosting the gathering and welcoming us so warmly into your lovely home.



Figure 5 Morrison Paradise

Time in Ashford passed in the blink of an eye — and the same seems true for the past ten years. Many new faces have joined the beekeeper exchange community, helping this wonderful tradition thrive. The next generation is already waiting in the wings and can even boast two experienced “old hands.” For these two young ladies, this year’s exchange in Ashford was already their third trip to the beautiful county of Kent.



Figure 6 The next Generation

Meanwhile, the next generation has grown to five, and it is a joy to witness this lively group growing up with the comforting knowledge that they are always welcome in both England and Germany.



Figure 7 The next Generation

Our sincere thanks also go to Katy Morrison for her outstanding organization of this wonderful weekend.

We look forward to seeing you again soon.

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