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The members of the Ashford Beekeeping Club who visited Germany

Beekeepers buzzing after visit

Ten members of Ashford Beekeeping Club travelled to meet their counterparts from Ashford's twin town, Bad Münstereifel.

This scientific, cultural and social exchange has been going on for many years, and this year it was Ashford's turn to visit Germany.

In Germany they meet up with members of the Imkergemeinschaft Bad Münstereifel.

On the first day they visited the Rheinpfalz Fachzentrum Bienen und Imkerei, where they were shown around this state-funded institution for

bee research. They toured the pathology laboratory, where they investigate bee disease, the honey laboratory where they analyse honey from around the region for quality, pollen content, and enzyme activity, and the impressive honey room where they extract the honey.

In the grounds they saw many hives, some fitted with electronic monitoring that counted the bees out and counted them back in again.

The second day was spent with individual beekeepers comparing techniques and approaches to beekeeping.

The third day involved a drive across the border into Belgium to visit a queen breeding facility, followed by a barbecue.

Ashford beekeepers is a branch of Kent Beekeepers Association.

The aim of the club is to promote the craft of beekeeping and encourage best beekeeping practices.

The club meets monthly, and summer meetings are held at the club's apiary at Cheeseman's Green. Anyone interested in beekeeping or the club can contact the club via the website, www.ashfordbeekeepers.co.uk