



# Gravesend Branch Newsletter

May 2026



## Apiary news (and thanks!)

The apiary clear up happened, thanks to Mark and Di, Phil and Cathy who got stuck in, much to Lesley's relief who thought she was going to be on her own! Please do check out the dates on the rota and if you are available to help that would be much appreciated, thank you.

## Honey Bee Factoids...

There have been bees on planet earth for more than 100 million years.

Some ancient civilisations believed that bees were created from the carcasses of dead animals. Ancient Egyptians believed that bees were the tears from their sun god, Ra. The Ancient Greeks minted coins with bees on them. The bible mentions honey bees and honey in the ancient Sanskrit texts. Bees were sacred in Ancient Rome and Greece. Even Zeus had a relationship with honey bees! A young Zeus was raised in a cave with said sacred bees that fed him honey until he was fully grown.

Mead (an alcoholic fermented honey beverage) was first produced in ancient China around 7,000 BCE, making this the oldest recorded alcoholic beverage and the first recorded honey harvesting cave painting is in Spanish caves, the art work is believed to be around 6,000 to 8,000 years old.

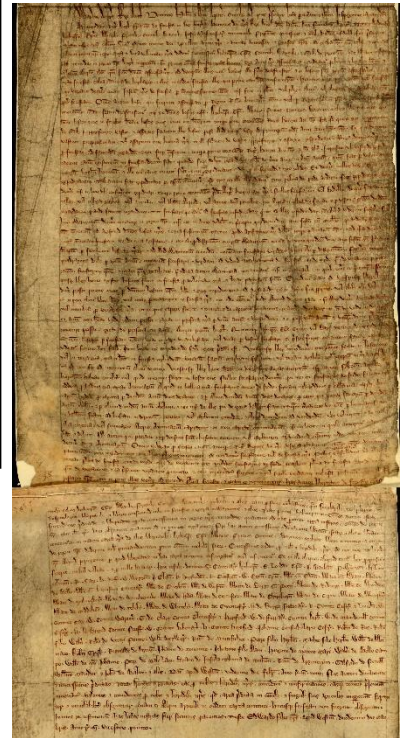
Our very own Magna Carta has a link to legalised harvesting wild honey, although actually found in the Charter of the Forest of 1225. This charter is a companion document to the Magna Carta. It reads *'Every Freeman shall have, within his own woods, ayries of hawks, sparrow hawks, falcons, eagles and herons: and shall have also the honey that is found within his woods.'* Pic right is a the original document Charter of the Forest 1225.

## April's Taster Course

This year's taster course was very successful with a very friendly and interested set of candidates most of whom seemed keen to pursue beekeeping at some point, a few who had already dipped their toe in the water. Welcome those who have already joined the Branch.

## Kent County Show

Hilde Koets has taken over as head steward for the County Show in July, so if you're interested in stewarding please advise Hilde on "koets@btconnect.com" she will then send you a form so you can indicate what days/sessions you are prepared to commit to. You get a ticket for the whole day, steward for half the day that allows you to roam the site and it is quite good fun and you meet Beekeepers from all over the County. County Show dates are Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July.



## March meeting news.

The March meeting on the Hardy method of queen raising explained by Roy our vice-chair was very interesting and gave us all pause for thought to see whether we might try it out and possibly prevent our colonies swarming! Thanks Roy for a very interesting & in depth explanation.

## Upcoming events for your Diary.

There will be a visit to Sidcup Beekeepers apiary at Baldwyns Park, Coldblow Crescent, Bexley, DA5 2BA coming up soon, watch this space for more details, may be via our What's Ap group. Apiary Manager is Michael Hill. We hope to see some of our members there.