



February Newsletter.

Hello Members,

With the brighter days and the evenings starting to get lighter the season feels tantalisingly close. As a new keeper, it feels really exciting to be at the bottom of what is sure to be another steep learning curve this year. I've hefted my hives and they still feel very heavy so recently took off the supplemental fondant I'd been feeding the bees to ensure they have enough room for the queen to lay and for them to start building the numbers back up.

I was pleased to hear that the branch meeting on Saturday went well, I was sorry to have missed it but currently have Covid so have been isolating at home. Thank you to Peter Cox and Lesley for organising and running the meeting.

Branch Lunch

In other exciting news, Lesley has arranged a club lunch on the 26th of February at the Rising Sun Pub in Fawkham - arrive from 12.30 with lunch at 1pm. It would be great to see as many members as possible attend. You'll need to let our treasurer Charlotte know whether you plan to attend and with whom by the 12th of February, along with your menu choices (see below). The cost, to include a tip, will be £20 for 2 courses and £23 for 3 courses, you'll need to pay for your own drinks separately. You can contact Charlotte via charlotte_niranjan@yahoo.com or on 07939 577764. Please email Charlotte if possible.

Starters - Soup of the day
Prawn Cocktail
Stilton stuffed mushrooms
Sweet chilli chicken and salad

Mains Game pudding, mashed potatoes with seasonal vegetables
Garlic paprika chicken, skinny fries and salad
Seabass fillet with a royale sauce, new potatoes, seasonal vegetables
Curry of the day, rice and flatbread
(V) Tomato and goat's cheese tart with salad and skinny fries

Dessert Fruit crumble and custard
Chocolate fudge cake
Berries and cream

Beebase:

A reminder to members that you really should have signed up and registered your colonies at bee base. <https://nationalbeeunit.com/>. Here's a little bit from the introduction on their website in case you aren't familiar with their work:

"BeeBase is the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) National Bee Unit website. It is designed for beekeepers and supports Defra, Welsh Government and Scotland's Bee Health Programmes. BeeBase supports the aims of Healthy Bees Plan 2030, which focus on protecting and sustaining our valuable national bee stocks. Our website provides a wide range of apicultural information for beekeepers, to help keep their colonies healthy and productive. It provides a wide range of beekeeping information, such as the activities of the NBU, honey bee related legislation, pests and diseases information which includes their recognition and control, publications, advisory leaflets and key contacts."



Pg2:

Signing up to BeeBase means becoming personally involved and doing your bit to help the beekeeping community. Signing up to BeeBase has a huge impact on disease control in our beekeeping community; registering ownership and location of your apiaries means National Bee Unit (NBU) inspectors can target visits to those apiaries which are closest to known disease. The more beekeepers and apiaries registered, the more effective the NBU inspectorate response can be. We all know quite a bit more than we'd perhaps have liked to about the spread of disease having been through the last two years of covid but we all appreciate now how important things like disease management and track and trace are in containing disease and virus' because of this. It's really no different with our bees, if bee base know who you are and where you are you'll be notified of any notifiable disease in your area and have the benefit of visits by the local bee inspector to check your own apiaries. Whats more its a completely free service with a website absolutely packed with free information for beekeepers like us!

That about wraps up February's newsletter, as ever if you'd like to contribute please let me know. There are rumours circulating that there might be a 'how to build your own boxes' feature coming soon so make sure you've sharpened your tools and got your plasters at the ready!

Neil