Hexham Beekeepers Association

Bee Buddies Scheme

Email sent to members on 24 June 2016

In recent years the Association has grown considerably.  As a result we now have a significant number of beekeepers who are beginners, those with just a few years’ experience, and members with considerably more experience and knowledge.  Whilst events such as the regular beginners' days at the Wylam apiary are extremely valuable as a learning tool we would now like to find ways to tap into the wealth of knowledge and experience that the Association as a whole possesses and make it more readily available to our newer members.  On the other hand we no doubt have a number of more established members who would welcome the assistance of an extra pair of hands when working in their apiaries, or who might need more substantial help.  The "new blood" in the Association could provide a useful resource for them.  
  
What we are therefore looking at is the establishment of a "Bee Buddies" scheme.  Let me emphasise from the outset that this is not proposed to undermine or supersede the beginners' sessions, nor indeed such courses as the one run at Kirkley Hall.  It is not intended to in any way make our more established beekeepers responsible for the education or development of our newer members.  Rather, the intention is to create a network of "pools" of Bee Buddies, based on location and proximity, who are prepared to offer help, guidance, or assistance, as their own time and inclination permits, as and when required, or who are seeking more experience, or otherwise willing to 'lend a hand'.    
  
Specifically, we are looking to identify members falling into one or more of the following categories:  
  
1.  Those members, of whatever level of experience, who would welcome the opportunity of seeking help or guidance from other, more experienced members.  
2.  Those members, of whatever level of experience, who would be prepared to offer such help or guidance.  
3.  Those members who would simply like to obtain more experience of handling bees other than their own and so would be willing to help out other members at their apiaries.  
4.  Those members who would be willing to offer such practical experience, even if you are only a novice yourself, or would otherwise simply welcome some help in handling their own bees.  
  
While obviously such an arrangement will not necessarily suit everyone I would hope that this idea will be attractive, and valuable, to many members of the Association, regardless of your current level of experience.  As a starting point therefore it would be most helpful if those of you who are interested could let me know and provide the following basic information:  
  
1.  Which of the above categories would be appropriate for you (it might be one, it might be all!).  
2.  How many years' experience do you have and how many colonies you currently keep.  
3.  Any restrictions, limitations, or special circumstances that might need to be taken into account.  
  
Please respond to Mark Robinson at [**beebuddies.hbka@gmail.com**](mailto:beebuddies.hbka@gmail.com)  
  
Armed with these responses we can then start to put together suitable pools.  
  
Obviously, if anyone is unsure about how this is intended to work or would just like to know more, please do not hesitate to get in touch at [**beebuddies.hbka@gmail.com**](mailto:beebuddies.hbka@gmail.com).