

# SOCIETY OF MODEL AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERS LTD

(T/A British Model Flying Association)

## TO ALL AREA COUNCIL MEMBERS

There will be an Area Council Meeting on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2014  
at 11.00am at Chacksfield House, 31 St Andrew's Road, Leicester LE2 8RE

Tel: 0116 2440028 Fax: 0116 2440645.

## A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for Absence.
- 2 Any key items arising from the last Areas Council Meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2013, not covered by subsequent events.
- 3 Confirmation of Wayne Pendleton as a Helicopter ACE.
- 4 To receive a proposal from the ASRC that the attached Multicopter 'A' Test be added to the inventory of Achievement Scheme Tests (Deferred from the Full Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2014).
- 5 Discussion on the future of Areas and how to achieve best practice. See attached documents (especially the paper by Duncan McClure) which form the basis for this discussion.
- 6 Areas perception of key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities (for improvement) and Threats to the future of the BMFA.
- 7 Discussion on the recent BMFA Survey (results summary now on the BMFA website <http://www.bmfa.org/News/NationalModelFlyingCentreSurvey/tabid/224/Default.aspx>), especially in the light of the loss of Church Fenton and the restrictions to casual use of Barkston Heath. (Both are new factors since the survey was initiated).
- 8 Any Other Business (Items to be notified preferably prior to the meeting and certainly in advance of the meeting if notified on the day).
- 9 Any perceived need for another scheduled meeting.

Linda Harding  
Office Manager.  
June 2014

### CIRCULATION:

All Council Members  
SAA Delegate  
All Area Chairmen  
All Area Secretaries  
RNMAA Chairman  
All Area AS Co-ordinators  
PAS Controller  
SF AS Controller

All Tech. Comm. Chairmen  
Fellows (as requested)  
Club Bulletin  
Office Manager  
Accounts Manager  
BMFA News Editor  
Club Support Officer  
Development Officer  
Chief Executive



**BRITISH MODEL FLYING ASSOCIATION  
THE R/C ACHIEVEMENT SCHEME  
TEST STANDARDS for CHIEF EXAMINERS  
and CLUB EXAMINERS  
GUIDANCE for TEST CANDIDATES  
THE 'A' CERTIFICATE  
(MULTIROTOR)  
2014 ISSUE**

### **General**

The Achievement Scheme is run by the BMFA as a National Scheme and it is open to all model flyers. Where a non-member wishes to participate in the achievement scheme the examiner who will be conducting the test must inform the BMFA office via email or telephone no later than the day prior to the test being carried out of the non-member's full name, address and the date that the test will be conducted. This enables the BMFA to extend insurance at suitable levels for the day of the test. If this procedure is not followed the test will be invalid.

The 'A' certificate is a measure of flying ability and safety which 'may be equated to a safe solo standard of flying' and an increasing number of clubs use it as their 'safe solo' test. As an examiner, the level of competence you should expect of a candidate should be based on that criterion; that is, is this person, in your opinion, fit to be allowed to fly unsupervised?

### **A candidate wishing to take the 'B' must already have passed the 'A' in that discipline.**

The candidate for the 'A' certificate should have studied the BMFA Members' Handbook and be familiar with the 'Safety Code for General Flying as well as the 'operational guides, 'all models', 'radio control' and 'helicopters'. Besides being an excellent guide to the safe flying of helicopters and other model aircraft, most of the questions asked at the end of the test will be from these sections of the Handbook. There is a section in the Handbook that gives the relevant page numbers of these sections but remember that addendum sheets to the Handbook are published in BMFA News and on the BMFA website and these may also be relevant as they contain up-to-date information.

Also be aware that you may ask questions on any local site rules that the candidate should be aware of and these may form an important part of the test questions you ask.

### **Outdoors**

The test may not be flown indoors. It was designed to be flown outdoors and the text of the test manoeuvres highlights this. It is important to remind candidates that their ability to cope with various wind conditions is an integral part of the test.

### **The Model**

The test can be performed with virtually any model multirotor, fixed pitch or collective. A multirotor for the benefit of this test is defined as a rotorcraft with three or more rotors. Whatever model is brought by the candidate, it must be suitable to fly the manoeuvres required by the test they are taking. You do not have the authority to alter the required manoeuvres to suit a model and if, in your opinion, the model is unsuitable for the test then you should explain this to the candidate and tell them that they cannot use that model. The selection of the model to do the test is the responsibility of the pilot and it is their ability you are testing, not the model.

Electric Powered Models must be treated as LIVE as soon as the main flight battery is connected, irrespective of radio state and great care must be demonstrated by the candidate. The arming sequence should be clearly understood and discussed/demonstrated to you by the candidate.

### **Buddy Box Systems**

Buddy leads and other dual control training aids must not be used during any achievement scheme test.

### **Gyros and Electronic Stabilisation**

It is acceptable to use an electro-mechanical or solid state gyro/s in a multirotor being used to take the test although electronic stabilisation is restricted to enabling flight, at no point should the stabilisation effect take over control from the pilot or achieve automated flight. This allows a range of gyros to be fitted, from simple yaw dampers to solid state heading lock units.

The use of any autopilot and/or artificial stability features which are (or may be) designed into such units beyond the definition above is not acceptable during the test and is not allowed.

Candidates should be prepared to explain the capabilities of the system they are using and show that it does not take over control from the pilot and that automated flight will not be achieved during the test.

### **Height and Speed**

The 'A' certificate candidate should be a reasonably confident pilot, even though they may have been flying multirotor for only a few months. Flying too high or too low is not the mark of a confident pilot. The test should be flown at the heights specified in the individual elements with little deviation.

The two manoeuvres in the 'A' certificate test require slightly different speeds as will be explained on the manoeuvre descriptions.

### **Wind Direction**

There is no requirement for the fixed positioning of manoeuvres relative to the wind direction in the Multirotor 'A' certificate and you will find no reference to the wind in the text of either the test or this Standards Document.

This makes it absolutely ESSENTIAL that you discuss this with the candidate at length so that you are both aware of exactly how you want the manoeuvres to be presented and what limitations will be accepted if the wind direction is not favourable.

### **Consistency**

The candidate must ensure that the model stays at a reasonably constant height and heading and moves at a constant speed through the manoeuvres as required. All deviations from steady and well controlled flight should be noted as they will form part of your examiner's judgement of the test flight. Good use of the controls to maintain a constant height throughout the test is something you must watch carefully for.

Slight variations of height and failure to fly spot-on lines are not necessarily reasons to fail the candidate on their own, but they do give an indication of the pilot's general level of competence and should influence your final decision.

Very poor height control or significant failures to hover with the craft held in the correct direction are a sure sign that the pilot has not practised the test and are legitimate reasons to fail the candidate.

### **Continuity**

The manoeuvres are set out in such a way that they are flown one after the other as a short sequence. You should discuss with the candidate before the flight the way in which you would like the various elements flown and the candidate should have a good knowledge of the test before the event. If the candidate is very hesitant during the test and is not capable of following the set sequence then you might conclude that they have either not had enough practice or that their basic flying skills are not yet well enough developed.

### **Trim**

It is expected that the candidate will start the test with a model that has been trimmed out previously. If you see obvious signs that the model is out of trim and the candidate makes no attempt to rectify the matter, you may well question their basic competence.

On the other hand, if they do need to re-trim and are making attempts to do so, you should make allowances for a short time of flight with a somewhat erratic path. This should not be penalised unless it puts the model in any dangerous situations or unless the model flies behind the pilot or into any other unsafe area. If the pilot does use the first part of the flight as a trimming exercise, they should be required to land as soon as they are satisfied with the trim and the test should then commence at manoeuvre (b). If a flight is abandoned prior to starting manoeuvre (b) because of trim problems it will not count as a test flight attempt.

### **Nerves**

Quiet competence is what you are looking for during the flight, but most candidates may well be nervous, and you should make some allowance for this. If the flyer is very nervous you should seriously consider abandoning the test for the time being and arranging a coaching flight or two for the candidate to settle them down before re-taking the test. This can be done on the same day and can really help those candidates who have trouble with nerves when flying in a test situation.

### **Repeating Manoeuvres**

At 'A' certificate level, the manoeuvres are simple and the candidate should be competent to fly them with very few errors. If you identify any major faults, the test should be taken again. It may be, however, that the candidate will make minor mistakes on a manoeuvre and if you are not fully satisfied with what you have seen you should not hesitate to ask for the manoeuvre to be repeated.

Some judgement is called for on your part here. The idea is not to let the candidate have multiple attempts at each manoeuvre until they get it right, but more to give you the best chance of assessing the competence of the pilot you are testing.

You should consider what you have seen the model do, and if you think to yourself, 'that could be better', then request that the manoeuvre be repeated. Beware of doing this too often, though, as you would be degrading the worth of the test and it must not degenerate into a series of practice manoeuvres.

### **Repeating the test**

The rules allow two attempts at the test in one day and if the candidate fails the first of these you must consider their performance in deciding what to do next. Many failures will be reasonably good or borderline cases and in these circumstances it may be appropriate to arrange one or two coaching flights before repeating the test. Remember that many of the candidates will be unfamiliar with flying under pressure and might do very well on the second test.

However, it will probably be obvious to you on many occasions that the pilot you are testing is simply not ready for the test they are taking. In this situation it is better that you tell them so quite clearly. It could then be extremely useful for you to arrange a demonstration test for them so that they can gain an understanding of the standard of flying that is required, especially if they are not clear about the manoeuvres and the positioning for them. This, possibly with a little coaching, is far more useful to everyone than simply telling the candidate that they have failed.

A flight which is abandoned for any reason prior to starting manoeuvre (b) will not count as a test flight attempt.

### **Interruptions to the Test**

A possibility that may occur during a test is an engine failure part way through, which with multirotors could very well lead to a damaged model. If this is the case then the test obviously cannot continue and you should invoke the rule that the test should be performed in one flight and count the flight as one of the two attempts allowed during the day.

Genuine engine trouble or even engine-out situations during the test may be dealt with in one of three ways.

If the test was being generally flown in a satisfactory manner and the problem can be rectified quickly then the candidate may be allowed to continue the test from the start of the manoeuvre in which the problem occurred.

If the problem cannot be rectified quickly but you consider that it was a genuine unforeseen occurrence, you may annul the test and not count it as one of the two attempts.

If the test up to the point of failure was not satisfactory, you have the option to cancel the rest of the test and count the flight as one of the two attempts allowed during the day.

Obviously, you will have to use your judgement on this matter as there will rarely be black and white situations but how they handled the emergency should be of great interest to you when you come to review the candidate's overall standard of flying.

### **Ground Positioning**

When taking a multicopter test, it is your responsibility as the Examiner to lay out a series of ground markers to assist both the candidate and yourself to assess the manoeuvres being flown. Small cones or any other similar marker may be used as long as they don't interfere with the flying of the model. However, it is vital that the marker used for the take off/landing point (TOLP) does not affect the model at all and probably the best marker in this case would be something like the fluorescent discs that lay flat on the ground. Alternatively, you could use some of the biodegradable ground marker spray paint that is readily available. The layout of markers required is shown below and it must be emphasised that absolute accuracy of distance is not required when setting them out. Pacing will be quite accurate enough. It is essential, though, that the centre marker, the TOLP and the pilot's position are in line

The general positioning of the markers will depend very much on the geography of the flying site and safe operation of the model and you should set them out with these factors in mind.

**It is not a requirement that the markers in the cross bar are used by the pilot but they are there to help. However, the centre marker, the TOLP and the pilot's position must be used with some accuracy.**

Landings should generally be no more than a metre from the takeoff/landing point and the pilot is expected to stay close to the selected pilot's position mark although it is not required that they 'plant' their feet. If you feel that the pilot is starting to wander, you should stop them and insist that they stand near the pre-selected mark. .

Remember that it is a requirement that 'all manoeuvres are carried out in front of the pilot' so the use of the pilot's position point will be important.

### **General Manoeuvres and Hovering**

All take-offs and landings should be smooth, without undue oscillations, and lifts and descents should be straight and controlled with the model a comfortable and safe distance in front of the pilot. In any stationary hovering the model should remain steady and should not oscillate unduly.

Movement of the model from one point to another whilst in the hover should be done at a steady walking pace.

The standard 'brief' hover time should be about five seconds. You should discuss this with the candidate before the test so that they know that you will want to see a positive stop with the hover long enough to show that the model is well controlled and steady with little wandering or oscillation. Stopwatch accuracy is not required.

The candidate should also be aware that the decision to move on is theirs and that you will not be asking them to commence with the next manoeuvre. However, during your pre-flight briefing, they may ask that you indicate when you are satisfied that they have completed their 'brief' hover times to help them decide when to move on. This is quite permissible if requested by the candidate.

### **Intermediate Landing**

Exceptionally, at a pre-determined point in the flight an intermediate landing may be permitted for the sole purpose of either re-fuelling or the fitting of a freshly charged flight battery. This landing may only be made with the prior consent of the Examiners. The pre-determined point may be either after a specific manoeuvre or at a specific time of flight, whichever is requested by the candidate and agreed by the Examiners.

Full pre and post flight checks are not normally required during an intermediate landing and take off unless the model suffered a hard landing. However, the candidate should give the model at least a quick visual examination whilst on the ground.

### **Administration**

There are specific forms for Examiners to use during the Multirotor 'A' test, and if you do not have one then a call to the BMFA Leicester office will have some in the post to you by return.

Completed forms should be sent to the Leicester office within seven days of the test and, whilst they must be filled in by the Examiner, they may be sent in to the office by either the Examiner or the Candidate. You should take great care that all the details are filled in correctly, especially the successful candidates **NAME** and their **BMFA number** (this can save a great deal of confusion). If the candidate is not a BMFA member then it is especially important that you get their name and address correct and in full.

This is very important as what is seen on the pass form is what will appear on the final certificate. It is embarrassing for you to have to send one back to be re-done and it gives the candidate a definite impression of sloppy work by someone.

**Helpers for Disabled Candidates, Young Candidates and Others Who have Requested Help During the Test**

When disabled or young candidates present themselves for the test it may be that they will not physically be able to perform all the actions that most candidates can. At times, other candidates may also request help with certain physical aspects during the test (they may, for instance, have an injured finger). There will be times when you, as an Examiner, will think 'how much can I relax the test requirements for this person'.

Some Examiners make the decision to make no allowances at all but this effectively bars many people from attempting the tests. If we think of the achievement scheme as a true national scheme then we must consider how we can accommodate candidates, not how we can stop them from participating.

The answer, of course, is that you, as an Examiner, must make on-the-spot decisions about what you will allow during the test and, in such cases, you are within your authority to take such decisions. The guidelines set out below may help but at all times the two items at the end of this section must take precedence. They are not negotiable and mean that, whoever the candidate is, they have to convince you that they know what they are doing or what is happening for the full duration of the test.

For instance, a disabled flyer may have difficulty handling the model and may not be able to carry it out to the strip or retrieve it after the flight. The sensible use of a helper is certainly allowable in such cases but it is essential that they only do what the candidate asks them to do. Pre-flight checks and engine starting may be another problem area that can be overcome by a helper but you should expect the candidate to do as much of the work as possible themselves and they should be able to talk you through anything that the helper does for them. Be sure to discuss all this with the candidate before starting the test.

All of these comments can apply to younger flyers too but there is an added complication with engine starting. Many parents are very unhappy about letting their children near a running engine and will not allow them to start their own engines. This is a perfectly valid view and, again, is a case where a helper can be used. If this situation does occur with the younger candidates, however, you should insist that they do all the pre-flight and preparation work themselves, up to applying the starter to the engine. If they cannot do this then they should not pass.

After engine start, the helper can adjust engine controls and carry the model but only on the instructions of the candidate.

**In all cases:**

**(1) If, at any time, the helper takes over the decision making process from the candidate then the candidate must fail.**

**(2) You can make no allowances whatsoever for anyone during the flying of the test. The candidate can either perform the flight manoeuvres as specified or they can't. If they can't then they must not be passed.**

Make sure in your briefing that both the candidate and the helper are fully aware of both of these points.

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## The Test

### **(A) Carry out pre-flight checks as required by the BMFA safety codes.**

The pre-flight checks are laid out clearly in the BMFA Members' Handbook. The candidate should also go through the pre-flying session checks, also laid out in the Handbook. Ask the candidate to go through their checks as if the test was their first flight of the day. Particular attention should be given to airframe, control linkages and rotors.

Points to look for are that the candidate has a steady and regular ground routine, especially when starting and tuning the engine. Nerves should not play a part in the pits, and you should satisfy yourself that the candidate is in full control of what they are doing whilst preparing the helicopter for flight.

A tidy flight box and a neat ground layout makes a good impression but bear in mind that that 'A' certificate candidates may not have been flying for too long and you should make allowances.

A poor performance in this area is not direct grounds for failing the candidate but can certainly be part of a cumulative fail if other aspects of the performance are below the standard you expect.

Pay particular attention to the way the candidate uses the local frequency control system and make sure that they fully understand it and use the correct sequence appropriate to their model. For 35 MHz, this is usually 'get the peg, Tx on, Rx on'. For 2.4 GHz, the candidate should be aware of any local transmitter usage limitations and if a flight peg is required, it must be obtained before the usual Tx on, Rx on sequence. Some radio equipment and, occasionally, a specific model requirement requires that the Rx be switched on first and, if this is the case, the candidate should explain this clearly to you.

With electric powered models, take note that the candidate is aware that the model is 'live' as soon as the flight battery is plugged in and that they take appropriate safety precautions. If a separate receiver battery is fitted, the candidate should have the opportunity to check the operation of the radio equipment before the flight battery is plugged in.

Watch carefully and take note that the transmitter controls, trims and switches are checked by the pilot.

All candidates are required to be aware of the local the frequency control system and anyone who is required to use it but switches their radio on before doing so should be failed on the spot.

Electric powered models must be carried out from the pits area to a safe point before the flight battery is connected and they MUST be considered live as soon as the flight battery is plugged in. Great care should be taken at this point and any help available to the candidate should be used in the interests of safety.

If there is no one else available then there is nothing to stop you aiding the candidate by, for instance, carrying the model to the test area etc. but any such actions must be performed by you directly on the instructions of the candidate. You must not prompt them or carry out any actions of your own accord.

It is important that you talk these points over with the candidate in your pre-flight briefing.

### **(b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) together form a horizontal 'T'.**

During the course of manoeuvres (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) the model should not have deviated significantly from a straight line drawn between the end points Slight drifting may be

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permissible in adverse wind conditions, but should be rapidly corrected and put back on the correct course. If the deviation is severe, or the model does not follow the line at all, the candidate should not pass. The hovering speed between the end points is at the discretion of the candidate but must be no faster than a slow walk.

Each stop should be a controlled hover, with any movement being quickly checked, without signs of large over-corrections. The pauses at each hovering point should be about five seconds, other than in (b).

The height of the multirotor should be consistent throughout these manoeuvres with no major deviations.

**(b) Take off and hover tail in over the take-off point, with the multirotor at eye level, for about twenty seconds and then land.**

Take off should be smooth and the lift to eye level should be vertical, straight and controlled with the model a comfortable and safe distance in front of the pilot. Once at eye level the model should remain stationary and should not oscillate unduly. You should notify the candidate when the hover time of about twenty seconds has passed and ask him to commence with the next part of the manoeuvre. The descent and landing should be smooth and steady with little oscillation on touch down.

**(c) Take off and hover for about five seconds, then hover the multirotor slowly forwards for approximately five metres, stop, and hover for about five seconds.**

After the take off and five seconds hover time and, on your command, the pilot now hovers the model forward, at a slow hovering pace, for a distance of about five metres then stopping and hovering for about five seconds. All the previous comments about line, height at eye level, speed and steadiness apply and the orientation of the model should still be facing in the same direction as this initial forward hover, as for all the rest of the first set of manoeuvres.

**(d) Hover the multirotor slowly sideways for approximately five metres, stop, and hover for about five seconds.**

The pilot may choose to perform the initial sideways hover in either direction (to his left or right) and, once you have been told the direction, the candidate should, without turning the model, commence a sideways hover at eye level for a distance of approximately five metres. Having travelled about five metres the pilot will stop the model and hold it in a steady hover at eye level and, with the tail pointing in the same direction as it was when it took off, for about five seconds

**(e) Hover the multirotor slowly sideways in the opposite direction for approximately ten metres (five metres past its original position in front of the pilot), stop, and hover for about five seconds.**

At the end of the hover time the pilot, without turning the model, will hover it sideways in the opposite direction, passing in front of them and stopping 5 metres past the centre line. At this point the pilot will once again stop and hover the model with it still facing in the same direction as it was at take-off.

**(f) Hover the multirotor slowly sideways in the first direction to bring it back to its original position in front of the pilot, stop, and hover for about five seconds.**

The candidate should, without turning the model, commence a sideways hover at eye level for a distance of approximately five metres back to the centre marker. Having travelled to the centre marker the pilot will stop the model and hold it in a steady hover for about five seconds at eye level and, with the tail pointing in the same direction as it was when it took off.

**(g) Fly slowly backwards, bringing the multirotor back to its original position over the take off point, stop, hover for about five seconds and land.**

After hovering for about five seconds, the model is hovered backwards (without turning it) to the start position, stopped and hovered for about five seconds above the TOLP with skids at eye level. After the hover time has been completed the model should descend and land close to the original take off point. During this last section, you will be observing the same criteria as previously and the model should have performed as before in relation to the course and at a similar speed. The descent and landing should be smooth and steady with little oscillation of the tail on touch down caused by poor tail control.

**(h) Take off and fly slowly forward for approximately 5 metres, stop and hover for about five seconds. Turn 90 degrees either left or right and fly forward to perform two 'lazy eights', each at least 30 metres in length. Each time the multirotor passes in front of the pilot it must be sideways on to the pilot and throughout the manoeuvre the model must be flying forward, not sideways.**

The pilot should make a quick visual check that the area he intends to overfly is clear and that no other models are flying in the near vicinity; you should be watching for definite head movements as they scan the area.

The pilot should fly this manoeuvre at a safe height above eye level, but should not fly at such a height that the model cannot be clearly seen by both the pilot and yourself. Between eye level and five metres is the correct height band for this part of the test and the model **must** hover through the lazy eights, not fly through them. The pilot must be clear about the height at which they wish to fly before they take-off and you should discuss this with them in the pre-flight briefing.

Having ensured that it is safe to start the manoeuvre, the pilot then takes the model off, rises smoothly to the flight level previously selected and hovers forwards for approximately 5 metres, stopping over the centre marker and hovering for about five seconds.

The pilot then turns the model 90°, either left or right and, at the same time, slowly moves off forward at about a **walking pace** (but still in the hover). It is not required that the 90° turn is completed before the model accelerates; the turn and acceleration may be one smooth manoeuvre although the pilot may treat them as separate manoeuvres if they wish.

The pilot moves away at his chosen height for a distance of about fifteen metres where they begin a turn the model smoothly through 180°, flying forward in the hover all the time, and

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bringing the model back across in front of them. Without hesitation the model continues at the same speed in the new direction until it has flown past the pilot for a further fifteen metres to his opposite side. At this point he smoothly executes another 180° turn, causing the model to be now moving in the same direction as the first leg, again hovering across in front of the pilot.

The model does not stop at this point but it then repeats the events of the first lazy eight until two full eights have almost been completed and the model is near or over the centre ground marker.

During the lazy eights, you will be looking for a safe controlled flight throughout. The candidate should not lose or gain height significantly on the turns and should hover in a straight line between the turns with only sufficient drift on the model to prevent it from moving either further away or, more dangerously, closer to himself during each leg of the manoeuvre. The **overall** length of each eight should be at least thirty metres and the model must be sideways on to the pilot each time it passes across their front. Some allowance can be made for a strong or gusty wind but the basic points of the manoeuvre must still be demonstrated.

**At no time during the manoeuvre should the model be flying sideways. Throughout all the turns and straight flight, it must be flying forward in the hover and not 'crabbing' sideways.**

The turns should be made by use of cyclic and rudder co-ordinated correctly, and must **not** be half pirouettes at the end of each leg. The flight pattern should be as the diagram in the BMFA Members' Handbook and not deviate significantly from it. The pilot should be equally competent to the left and to the right when flying this manoeuvre. If any significant difference in their flying skills shows up here then you should seriously consider whether they show the degree of competence necessary. It should be borne in mind that the manoeuvres in the test have been made reasonably simple, so that a fairly high degree of control can be demanded.

**(i) At the conclusion of the two 'lazy eights', bring the multirotor to a halt sideways-on over the centre marker. Turn the model tail in to the pilot and hover for about five seconds. From this point fly the model to a landing on the original take off point.**

At this point the model should be approaching the area of the centre marker, still at the chosen manoeuvre height, and the pilot should aim to smoothly decelerate the model to a stop in front of and sideways on to himself. The model is then turned to the heading it had before the lazy eights were started and hovered for about five seconds. At this point it should be over the centre marker, about five metres in front of the TOLP and hovering at the standard height.

The model is now flown to a landing at the original take-off point. The path taken is entirely at the discretion of the pilot and you should take the opportunity to watch carefully for a smooth well-thought-out and safe manoeuvre.

After landing, the candidate should shut down the engine and allow the rotor blades to stop turning before collecting the model to return to the pits.

Remember that electric models must be assumed to be 'live' until the flight battery has been disconnected and the handling of the aircraft by the candidate must reflect this during retrieval and in the pits area.

**(i) Complete post flight checks as required by the BMFA Safety Codes.**

These are clearly set out in the BMFA Members' Handbook, but you should pay particular attention to the correct Rx off, Tx off sequence and watch carefully to see that the frequency control system in use is cleared correctly.

### **The Questions**

The candidate then 'must answer correctly a minimum of five questions on safety matters, based on the BMFA Safety Codes for General flying and local flying rules'

How many questions you ask will depend on the circumstances at the time. For instance, if the candidate has done a good flying test and answers the first five questions with confidence then you need go no further. An acceptable test but with some rough edges can be offset to an extent by the candidate performing well in the first five questions.

A candidate who has done a test which you found only just acceptable and who hesitates on the questions should be asked a few more than five questions and if you are still not satisfied that they have actually read the safety codes, you should not hesitate to fail them.

The achievement scheme is a test of both flying ability and knowledge. It does not matter how well the candidate can fly, if they are unable to answer the safety questions they should not pass.

There is some debate as to whether a list of 'approved' questions should be published for examiners to use. Current opinion is that if such a list is published then candidates will also be able to study the list, and will not need to study the BMFA handbook. This is probably not a good idea.

As an examiner, however, you should prepare yourself thoroughly for any testing that you do, and you may wish to sort out your own personal and private list of suitable questions. Do not forget that you can call upon any local rules which you are aware of and that the candidate should know. If you do compile a personal list of questions, do not let the candidate see them.

Remember that the majority of the questions you ask are to be BASED on the BMFA safety codes; you are not expected to ask them 'parrot fashion' and the candidate is not expected to answer in that manner either.

This opens up the possibility of asking the candidate if they can think of reasons behind specific rules, for instance, why is the club frequency control system operated as it is and what could go wrong? ; why should models not be hovered out of or into the pit area?

## **Examiners and Candidates Check List**

The following is a short checklist of matters to discuss with the candidate taken from this document. This checklist can be used to ensure that all points raised above have been discussed with the pilot prior to any flights:

1 Has the candidate read: -

The BMFA handbook

Local site rules (if applicable) 'Safety Code for General Flying' and 'Operational Guide, All Models and Radio Control'.

2 Discuss whether the model is suitable in "these conditions"

3 Any "no fly zones" need to be identified

4 Remind candidate to talk you through anything that a helper may do for them as the test progresses

5 Agree any manoeuvre requirements that need to be pre-determined by the Examiner and Candidate prior to the commencement of the test flights

6 Clearly identify the take off / landing point and agree with the candidate the required hovering times that he will be flying and you will be looking for. The

**‘A’ CERTIFICATE (MULTIROTOR)**

<b>Examiners</b>	<b>BMFA Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Examiner</b>
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Test Flight

Check List

**Candidates Name**

**FLIGHT TASK**

**COMMENTS**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| (a) | Carry out pre-flight checks as required by the BMFA Safety Codes.   |
| (b) | Take off and hover tail in over the take off point, with the multirotor at eye level, for about twenty seconds and then land.   |
| (c) | Take off and hover for about five seconds then hover the multirotor slowly forwards for approximately five metres, stop, and hover for about five seconds.  |
| (d) | Hover the multirotor slowly sideways for approximately five metres, stop, and hover for about five seconds  |
| (e) | Hover the multirotor slowly sideways in the opposite direction for approximately ten metres (five metres past its original position in front of the pilot), stop, and hover for about five seconds.   |
| (f) | Hover the multirotor slowly sideways in the first direction to bring it back to its original position in front of the pilot, stop, and hover for about five seconds.  |
| (g) | Fly slowly backwards, bringing the multirotor back to its original position over the take off point, stop, hover for about five seconds and land.   |
| (h) | Take off and hover forward for about five metres, stopping over the centre ground marker and hover for about five seconds. Turn 90 degrees either left or right and fly forward to perform two ‘lazy eights’, each at least 30 metres in length. Each time the multirotor passes in front of the pilot it must be sideways on to the pilot and throughout the manoeuvre the model must be flying forward, not sideways. |
| (i) | At the conclusion of the ‘lazy eights’, bring the multirotor to a halt above the centre ground marker, turn the model tail in to the pilot and hover for about five seconds. Then fly to the original take off point, and land.   |
| (j) | Complete post-flight checks as required by the BMFA Safety Codes.   |

**Answer a minimum of five questions on safety matters from the BMFA Safety Codes and local flying rules.**

**A Paper for Discussion on the BMFA Areas  
Have Areas passed their “Sell By” date?**

**Introduction**

It is apparent that many of the BMFA Areas are having great difficulty in getting adequate representation at their Area meetings and indeed Robin Gowler as the outgoing BMFA Chairman stated at the 2013 AGM, we need to consider whether the Areas model is still relevant or “has it passed its sell by date”.

As the BMFA (SAME) is constituted, a very sensible set of Articles are established to ensure the somewhat disparate needs of the “Everyday fun flyer” and the “Competition Flyer” are both recognised and properly catered for. This is achieved by two parallel Councils both acting as important Sub Councils to the Board of Directors of the Society namely the Full Council. These two Sub Councils are of course the Areas Council and the Technical Council. However, even in the early days, for the majority of flyers their primary focus was the Club to which they belonged. Having elected a Club Committee to deal with the BMFA and other matters, flyers had limited interest or vision beyond their own club activities. The Club arranged the local flying field and the Club Committee ensured their BMFA affiliation and thus their insurance. This is still very much the case for our “Sunday casual flyers” who continue to have limited horizons and who, other than insurance, seek no involvement beyond their club.

Those with competition interests are much better focussed beyond their club and see the very real continued need for the organisation of events and co-ordination of rules and thus the vital role of the Technical Council, its Technical Committees and Specialist Bodies. The recent technology developments in the sport have been exploited primarily by the competition flyers but these developments have also has changed the scene for “Sunday flyers” with the advent of 2.4 GHz radios, ARTF and “Foamie” type models but, for them, the developments have in no way changed their horizons from that of their club. Indeed if, anything, with the lack of need to build their models, these “Sunday flyers” become less interested in “know how” sharing and therefore even more exclusively focussed towards their local flying activities.

**The Situation Post WWII**

The role of the Areas, when first set up, was to organise competitions in their Area and, above all, to provide a conduit for queries to the SAME/BMFA and to, as required, promote their members interests, thoughts and complaints to this central body. It should be remembered that travel over long distances was difficult in the post war years and (even at today’s petrol prices) comparatively more expensive than is the case now. As such these more localised competitions and events as organised by the Area were well supported and most importantly the BMFA did not have permanent headquarters and professional staff so queries and liaison via the Area was vital. Clubs could reasonably readily communicate with their Area and the Area with the Society whereas club communication direct with the (non professional staffed) BMFA was difficult.

Additionally model flying was, until the 1960’s confined to Free Flight and Control Line with the “builder of the model” in effect and, even when Radio came available, trouble free proportional control did not come on the scene till the mid 60’s. At the time also the SAME was an entirely volunteer organisation with the significant limitations implicit in that format.

### **The Situation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The majority of our present day members are Radio Control power flyers, generally with internal combustion engines but, of course with electric power ever growing in popularity. Free Flight and Control Line are now minority interests and are predominantly pursued by flyers with an interest in competition. Due, *inter alia*, to the ever increasing problem of finding suitable flying sites for these disciplines, the majority of competitions, are now “centralised” and open to, and supported by, flyers from all the BMFA Areas.

The primary changes however result from the BMFA benefitting from permanent staff who are readily contactable and able to provide instant advice and assistance direct to individual flyers on request. This is coupled with the IT revolution where phone call costs are trivial and internet with email access is almost universal. Thus with one “click” the BMFA can contact any club (or multiple clubs) and individuals and, *vice versa*, these Clubs or individuals can, and do, contact the BMFA.

### **The Devon Precedent**

The South West Area nominally comprises Devon and Cornwall. This is quite a long thin region with a poor north south road system albeit it is not the largest of the BMFA Areas. The population split in Devon alone tends to be concentrated at either the East or West ends of the County and East Devon both geographically and culturally is some distance from Cornwall. Due to serious differences of opinion between the east and west Clubs in Devon, resulting in the resignation of most of the Area Committee members, the decision was taken by Council to form two Sub-Areas: Devon and Cornwall but with the Devon Sub-Area suspended until further notice. Cornwall continues to operate as a (small) Area with Sub-Area meetings, AGMs and so forth and Cornwall receives “Area” funding as relevant to its modelling population. With the Devon suspension, funds from the South West Area account were transferred back to the BMFA Office but a pro-rata allocation is budgeted and held available for use by Devon Clubs in each financial year. Any budgeted funds which are not claimed revert to BMFA general funds at the end of the financial year. Clubs are free to claim against a clear set of criteria for running events, competitions or functions which are open to and for potential the benefit of other Devon Clubs and individuals, indeed for the potential benefit of any BMFA member who wishes to participate. The administration is done direct to the clubs by the Honorary Secretary and does not represent a large work load. When the suspension of Devon was agreed, it was anticipated that the Devon Clubs would wish to see their Area (or at least their Sub-Area) taken out of suspension after no more than one year. However that has not happened as the Devon Clubs appear completely content with the arrangements and, as things stand, there are no plans whatever to review this position. A welcome by product of the current arrangements for Devon is that while the Clubs continue to receive funding to a level as before the overall monies spent are considerably less as no meetings take place with consequent room hire and travel cost savings. A concern was the continued effective representation at Council for both the Devon and Cornwall Sub-Areas. It was not desired to add yet another Area representative with BMFA Director status but fortunately the RNMAA representative was also the South West Area delegate to Council prior to the split. It was convenient therefore for him to continue effectively co-opted to represent both Sub Areas in addition to his continuing to represent RNMAA at Council. This fortunate situation was of course unique to this Area.

**The Issue**

Many, but not all, of the Areas are now having real problems in achieving a quorum at Area meetings and many posts on Area committees remain unfilled. It has been seriously suggested that the quorum requirement be reduced to (just) two people. While this could be a way forward, it hardly represents good governance of an Area and is symptomatic of the lack of purpose issue for the Areas. A recent Council decision to hold Areas Council meetings when, and only when, serious agenda topics existed also is indicative of the limited current day relevance of the Areas as they stand. Making the Areas larger (say to match the Sports Council Regions) would make attendance at meetings yet more difficult and would be likely to create issues (as experienced on a smaller scale) by the previous joint operation of Devon and Cornwall. In short, are the Areas as they stand, still serving a useful added value purpose or do they simply now add a layer of administration between Chacksfield House and the Clubs? If use of the Areas was suspended for a trial period, copying the Devon precedent, then a considerable financial saving could be made, Council would become smaller and thus faster on its feet and the Clubs, who in reality make things happen, would continue to arrange competitions, shows, fly-ins and other related events exactly as, in practice, they do now. A down side however of losing Area Delegates to Council is the potential loss of a channel by which the concerns and issues affecting a member or club can be raised to Council. This could be overcome by having a couple of elected “Members Delegates” who had the responsibility of covering club and members interests in any way not catered for by other channels. Loss of the multiple Area Delegates would also, without further changes, unbalance Council by having a disproportionately high number of competition related attendees. This too however could be balanced by simply co-opting one (not all) representative for the various Technical Committees. This one delegate could be briefed to represent issues of any Technical Committee and of course they would also have the support of the Technical and Competition Secretaries.

**Next Steps**

This paper was prepared as a discussion document following some discussions by the BMFA Executive on the issues facing the Areas and the remarks by the retiring Chairman of the BMFA at the recent AGM. It is suggested that the forum of the January Council meeting be used for a short discussion, bearing in mind that many of the Area Delegates will not, by then, have had any opportunity to discuss it at Area meetings. If necessary a special meeting of the Areas Council could be called for further discussion or it may be that from indicative initial discussions in January the paper could be updated for more prolonged debate in May. Given a reasonable consensus, a formal proposal could be presented in September, and, if agreed and that agreement impacted the Articles of Association, then they too could be updated for (potential) agreement at the November 2014 AGM.

Robin Sleight MBE Honorary Secretary, December 2013 Draft 1

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Duncan McClure Paper

**Your BMFA is changing – or why your Area needs you !**

**The Need for Change**

The way the BMFA operates is changing, primarily to make the organisation more efficient and make better use of modern means of communications. These changes will mostly be invisible to the majority of members, a good example being the initiative implemented earlier this year, to only hold separate Areas Council meetings when there is an identifiable need. The object of this article is to try and give you an appreciation of the structure of the BMFA, why it is the way it is, and also look at ways we may be able to improve things for the future. The idea is to give club flyers an appreciation of where they fit in with the bigger picture and also to encourage members, via their clubs, to engage more with the wider organisation.

**BMFA Structure**

If you are wondering why the BMFA perhaps appears bureaucratic, this is because it is a legally constituted “Not for Profit” organisation and as such is formally registered at Companies House. This means that it is subject to relevant legislation, which is handled by a formal constitution with governance by a Board of Directors, the Full Council, who are charged to represent the interests of all of the members. This dictates the nature of some of the BMFA structure.

Hopefully you are all aware that the day to day running of the BMFA is handled by the professional staff in the Leicester Office, headed by Dave Phipps as CEO. However, I think it’s probably fair to say that many of you will be largely unaware of the significant number of hard working volunteers, who give freely of their time, contribute so much and are vital to the running of the organisation. One of the key aims of any changes to the way the BMFA operates is to make the most efficient use of this resource and also to encourage the involvement of others for the future.

To many flyers, the BMFA is simply the organisation which provides their insurance so they can fly safely at their local club field. Other than that and perhaps this bi-monthly magazine, they have little contact with the organisation other than when things go wrong, such as a threat to their flying field for example. However, as the motto says, “Together we achieve” and our belief is that both the flyers and the organisation could benefit from a greater interaction.

**The Areas Council**

The Full Council mentioned in the BMFA structure above, is made up of three elements: ten Elected Officers (much like your club committee), five representatives from the various Technical Committees, which look after the competition disciplines, and fourteen Area Representative, one from each of the BMFA’s Areas, (collectively known as Areas Council) who ultimately look after your club and you. Inevitably this wide representation results in a large Council which, at times, makes for slow decision making.

The five Technical Committees handle the rules and competitions for their disciplines and hence have regular interaction and a good understanding of the interests and activities of the competition flyers. To complement this, the Areas representatives are there to look after the interests of the clubs and their members within the Area and hence rely on input from their clubs in order to do this, of which more later.

As well as this, collectively, the Areas play a vital role as Areas Council in administering the Achievement scheme. They are responsible for appointing Area Chief Examiners, who in turn cascade examiner appointments to club level and so help improve standards of flying and safety for all. The Achievement Scheme is a good example of something the organisation provides for every flyer, not just those interested in competitions. The Areas Council appoints the members of the Achievement Scheme Review Committee (ASRC) and has final administrative oversight of their activities, decisions and recommendations.

### **You and your Area**

Each of the fourteen Areas has a committee of its own, elected in much the same way as a club committee, and the committee includes an Area delegate who is their representative on the Areas Council. This Delegate has a responsibility to represent the interests of all clubs and members within the Area. This is the route by which club flyers can have their interests properly raised and considered by the BMFA, and this is one of the ways that the BMFA provides demonstrable democracy to its membership.

The Areas hold regular meetings, normally four a year at a mutually convenient time (usually evenings) and location. These meetings are generally scheduled shortly in advance of the BMFA Full/Areas Council meetings, in order to allow the Area delegate to be briefed on how to respond to the various agenda items, including any votes. Every club in the area is invited, but sadly **many clubs do not attend**. This means that the area representation is not as effective as it could be and this is a situation the Council would like to improve.

One school of thought regarding the poor support at area meetings is that clubs, and hence their members, are content with the way things are. The apparent lack of interest could indeed be a positive indication, but we just don't know without some form of feedback. Another possibility is perhaps that clubs and their flyers feel too remote from BMFA processes and or feel that they can't have any meaningful input or influence. Hopefully, by highlighting the situation in this article, we have gone some way to showing that this needn't be the case.

When your club re-affiliates to the BMFA each year, your committee nominates an individual to attend Area meetings on your behalf. Do you know who your club representative is, and if so, do they attend ?

### **Area Activities:-**

- Vote on your behalf at BMFA Council
- Organise Area competitions and or training events (new pilot open days)
- Stimulate youth involvement / support local youth groups to encourage aero modelling as a hobby
- Organise and run Achievement Scheme Examiner workshops – to improve consistency
- Manage the activities of all Area Chief Examiners within the Area
- Arrange for Club examiner tests
- Recommend new Area Chief Examiners and Instructors
- Provide financial assistance to Area members who are representing GB in International competitions

Are there any other activities you think your Area should be supporting ?

**The Future**

A variety of alternative ways of communicating with both clubs and Areas are being considered, with the aim being to simplify and improve things, as well as separating ‘process’ and ‘business’ from issues that are relevant to clubs i.e. do we really need to occupy so much of Council meeting time just to ratify team members who have already been chosen by a rigorous selection process ? One solution being considered is the use of e-mail for voting and also electronic means of providing input to meetings, should attendance in person prove difficult. Initiatives like these could realise significant savings in time and costs and we’d welcome your support should they impact on you.

In addition, some form of incentive is being considered to encourage clubs to engage in Area business. This could take the form of a cash donation via a prize draw system. i.e. clubs who make a contribution to the business of their Area would be entered into a draw for say a few hundred pounds towards club funds, drawn after every meeting. Clubs that make no contribution, for whatever reasons, would be excluded.

Before every Area meeting the Area secretary sends an e-mail invitation to your nominated representative, but so often, as noted earlier, these invitations go unanswered. If you have any concerns regarding the contact details that are being used, which is a common problem, we’ve included a full list of all Area secretaries and Chairmen contacts details, to make it easier for you to get in touch.

Remember, your Area is there for you and it’s important you engage with them to get the best representation you can. Speak to your club committee and or your Area chairman, get involved in the process, you never know how useful or interesting it might be !

**What we hope to do:-**

- Keep existing Area structure, but improve speed of decision making and efficiency
- Make meetings more efficient
- Look to utilise the new BMFA web site for e-mail voting etc.
- Support Areas in the stimulation of youth involvement
- Provide an incentive for clubs to engage in Area business

**How to contact your Area – Things to add:-**

- *List of Area Chairmen & secretaries, with telephone and e-mail details*
  - *Family tree style diagram of structure*
  -
-

**From NE Area**

I will start by saying that the North Eastern Area agrees with all of David Lloyd- Jones's comments (only included them in this email because you did not receive them)

- In addition to David's comments, the North Eastern Area would like to know who would deal with any Ministry of defence land's that are rented. Who is going to take over the responsibility of gaining Licences for the Defence Land Agency or even booking an airfield on at least a monthly basis with the military, in our case the army, with whom we have a dialogue on first names basis. We have the use of Albemarle airfield and on a few occasions would have lost its use, without the communication link provided by our chair who has the extensive knowledge of all previous commandants, which has eased the issues.
- As David states attendance at area meetings may not be overwhelming and never has been, since the majority of our members only want insurance to comply the C.A.A. and aviation legislation. That is until some issues arise then they either turn to their area of head office.(bearing in mind HO is staffed 9 - 5 Mon to Fri and Area's are run on a voluntary basis so may not be as accessible due to the dramatic change in the work ethos over the years.)
- Reference is made several times to Sunday fliers, who probably make up the majority of the membership, these members are equally entitled to representation as everyone else, including competition fliers.
- If as Andy Symons stated the office is not complying with a previous decisions made by council, "that the office should notify and area committee if they intend to visit a club within that area", **surely the office are undermining the Area committees at source.**
- If we do away with Area's then the office would have to take control of the Achievement Scheme, Education and nominations for awards, citations etc. compounding the thought that several members hold that the BMFA is only interested in the competition flier.
- What is going to happen to the education element of areas? We have a very positive education officer who is invited into schools on a regular basis. Where are kids going to see all classes of model aircraft built/flown etc?
- This would be another nail in the coffin of the flight Challenge, and to a lesser degree to the University Challenge. We suspect that if area initiatives are removed then schools, scouts, and clubs are less likely to get involved without expert guidance. Where would manpower and funding come from if any educational establishment requested help.
- Also the extra work involved would probably necessitate the employment of another member of staff which would negate any savings made.
- It was noted by the delegates, those with long memories, at the January area meeting that there is a high element of Barcs personnel on BMFA executive and are somewhat concerned about a power shift.

- Finally this could be seen as a way to increase the Executive Vote by reducing the number of votes from the Area's, in effect giving the Executive a larger percentage Vote.

Thomas Jones , North Eastern Area Delegate

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### **The future of the BMFA Area structure- East Anglia input**

#### **Introduction**

This paper is the East Anglian Area Committee's response to Robin Sleight's paper to the General Council entitled "Have the Areas passed their 'Sell by' date?" In addition to this question, Robin also suggested some solutions and also questioned the role of the technical committees.

#### **Rationale and Impact of the Sleight Paper**

There is no clear statement in the Sleight Paper as to what has prompted its publication but it is clear that reducing costs is a key issue. In the discussion at Full Council, a further issue, wasting the time and blunting the enthusiasm of unpaid volunteers attending Areas Council, was proposed as another. However, as Areas Council has been suspended, to be called only when required, it has triggered the problem of how to deal with an alternative to Areas Council. We have just seen the use of e-mail ballots to resolve an election and confirmation of an appointment. There is no agreed format for how this process should work but rather a piecemeal cobbling together of policy on the hoof. There has been no Forum for an adequate debate other than a short discussion at Full Council with little time to consider the issue within the Areas as a whole.

Furthermore, the representation of Technical Committees to the Technical Council is a different issue and should not be included as part of the debate with respect to the Areas. This is unhelpful and does little to help us to resolve the key point.

#### **General prognosis**

We have discussed Robin's Question within this Area on many occasions. Our Area is not alone in suffering from a low turnout and little involvement from the Area Clubs. Clubs make contact when they have a specific issue. We are in general agreement with many of the points raised in the Sleight Paper. However, we differ as to a possible solution. Volunteers run the Areas and, as with any such organisation, the activity that is conducted is a reflection of the interests and commitment of those volunteers. It would be surprising, but nice, if all Area Committees were to be as active as the most active Areas within the BMFA. Nevertheless, we draw different conclusions from those contained in the Sleight Paper.

**The view from the East Anglian Area**

We have constructed this response from the input of the East Anglian Area committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January (12 members and 14 clubs). We have also included discussions that have followed the Council meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> January. We are keenly aware of the points raised in the Sleight Paper. Nevertheless, the Club's representatives, and not just the committee, expressed the view that they wanted the Area to take the lead in organising local interclub competitions, shows and other multi-club events.

They felt that a way to address the issues of a lack of awareness of the Area was for Area committee members to visit clubs to talk about the role of the Area and how it represented the clubs and members at the Council. Clubs have talks from the Head Office. The Council has ruled, "that the office should notify the Area committee if they intend to visit a club within that Area" yet this is not happening so, at these talks, the Area is not represented. The Area committee representative can give the input an Area perspective.

In the vein of taking the East Anglian Area committee to the Clubs, our Area Achievement Scheme Coordinator outlined what he intended to do to achieve a higher level of standardisation across the Area with Area Chief Examiners and Club Examiners. The Clubs present at the meeting welcomed this. This level of close liaison with Clubs would become much more difficult were Areas to be removed.

Club representatives asked why some queries to Head Office should not come to the Area for resolution. We agreed that the BMFA had the technical expertise to answer some of these questions better than the Area – generally these issues were about insurance or flying field problems – however, the Clubs felt that answers from the BMFA should be copied to the Area to keep the Area committee in the picture of what was going on in their patch. It may be appropriate for some questions to the BMFA to be passed back to the Area for either a response or a resolution. In any event, leaving the Area out of the loop is not the way forward.

We also feel that Area Committees should learn best practice from the more active thus Areas and thus achieve a better service to our Clubs. This could be a useful topic for the next Areas Council.

**Why do members not attend Area meetings or become involved in Area activities?**

There are number of reasons for the lack of attendance/involvement including:

- It is a fact that a large percentage of the membership join the BMFA "only for the insurance", and have no interest in anything beyond this requirement.
- The distance needed to travel to the Area meetings is probably a significant fact as to why attendances are low.
- The Club hierarchies may well be aware of the Area but fail to pass this fact down to the average club member.
- Centrally the BMFA does not always make the Clubs, or the membership, fully aware of the Areas and their part within the BMFA or refer to the Areas for help and assistance.
- Currently the Head Office does not keep the Areas in the discussion loop with Clubs.

**What would be lost if the areas were removed?**

We believe that there is a volume of activity/work undertaken within the Areas that is often overlooked by the Council, head office and Clubs. This hidden work supports the aims and objectives of the BMFA and includes:

- Ascertaining the suitability of potential candidates for appointment as an Area Chief Examiner or an Examiner to operate the scheme at the local level. There is the requirement for management of the scheme at an area or similar level.
- Education support and input at a local level from the Area would no longer be available
- Assistance from the areas with respect to the flight challenge would no longer be available.
- Other general support to the centre to the centre. The Areas will have general local information that the centre can tap into as and when required.
- Area organised events and the coordination of Clubs and the provision of direct finance or underwriting proposed activities by the area Clubs would not happen.
- Competitions are organised within the areas. Removing the areas will cut this level of event out. Travel is still an issue for many and this has come back with the present economic situation and the cost of fuel. Thus some only fly in the local contests in their area and that's their focus.
- Area committee members are available 24/7 to assist members and Clubs the Head Office is only open during normal working hours.
- Clubs DO at times seem to be apathetic and don't come to area meetings. However, we feel the system works successfully as when the Clubs do come to a meeting they get the help they want.
- How will the question of a BMFA Fellowships and other awards be addressed? It is usually the Area Committees who suggest a recipient for an award – because we have the knowledge about what happens on our ground. One of the representatives on the awards committee is from the Areas committees.
- Northern Ireland Area is an Area that is very successful - what happens to Northern Ireland if their area is disbanded?
- The Areas have web sites, through which local information is disseminated – these sites would disappear.
- The load on the BMFA head office staff would be greatly increased. This would be at a cost.
- The channels of communication to members would be depleted.
- The loss of organisational cadres provided by the areas would be lost and thus would reduce the pool of organisational talent.
- It would move the council further away from the general membership and a degree of contact would be lost. There is, at times, a “them and us” feeling and this would be exacerbated by this further separation of roles/input.
- Local liaison with the MOD. We need to handle relations with these flying sites carefully. Continuity of a local liaison person is often needed to ensure continuing use. A local history is more than useful and is in fact often a necessity. There are now few enough MOD sites available so what we have must be handled with care.

The above is a list of particular tasks that the Areas undertake. Another important aspect is that the Area acts as a stepping-stone for potential Council members to learn their “trade”. Being on the Area committee provides a bigger pool of potential Council candidates and provides some competition where currently there is little or none for Council posts. This is good for democracy within the BMFA. It is a big step for a Club member to decide to stand for a Council position. The Area allows the average club member a chance of thinking about standing for Council. Centralisation would not encourage this possibility.

The loss of the Areas will thus represent an overall loss in activity and expertise and input into organisational requirements of the BMFA. This loss would not be easy to replace. Why replicate and replace something that is already in place? A point that needs to be remembered is that the Area committees are VOLUNTARY the replication of that work from head office would be at a cost.

There is the unquantifiable aspect of networking. Areas talk to each other both at the council meeting and directly in order to help and improve how things are done. This is all happening without little noise or comment because The Areas know what needs to be done and they simply do it.

Remember that locally the Area can be and is the voice of the BMFA.

### **Cost savings?**

One of the drivers of the Sleight paper is that of cost saving. Two alternate areas for cost saving are:

- Because of the state of the conference room hotels have to be hired. The conference room is gradually being taken for storage. This material should be moved to a specialist store.
- The BMFA News could be made electronic and available to members via the web. The format need not change. It would allow those who wished to print it out. Being web based the size of the News would no longer be constrained allowing for more features to be included. This would be a win-win situation of getting more for less. It is expected that there will still be a cost of the production of a digital magazine.

### **The competition flyer**

The paper states that the competition flyers have a disproportionately large influence on the running of the BMFA. We need to remember that the competition members are the major source of organisers because they see the need of the BMFA and its relevance through their own enlightened self-interest – in other words they see the “bigger picture” that “there is more to the BMFA than just insurance”. They realise that that for our overall benefit a National body is essential. We need to keep this highly motivated section of the membership fully on board. Who else within the BMFA will have the competence to provide the input for the various Technical and other Committees? Remember that these guys form the long-term core membership of the BMFA.

## **Conclusion**

The Sleight Paper has encouraged those of us involved within the Areas to review the situation. However, this needs to be considered within the context of improving the overall operation of the BMFA. We agreed that changes to the Areas structure are needed, however, a form of intermediate activity/influence, between clubs and head office, is still required. There needs to be such a link within the BMFA hierarchy.

So what should be done? We need to make changes but it should be an evolution rather than a revolution. So a position should be developed in order to retain the best of the current structure. We need to retain what is good and build upon that basis.

Our suggestion of the way forward is that:

- We need a longer and an informed debate.
- We need clarity as to what the real issues are.
- We need to understand what each of the Areas actually undertakes.
- We have reduced the Areas Council to a level of “by request” only but not, apparently, based on a well thought through rationale. Should this experiment continue in order to test its functionality?
- We should seek the views of the membership.

Whatever is done must not be done in a rush, as it needs consultation and careful deliberation. Then IF the Areas need reform this must be carried out in a structured manner. Remember if we take it apart without due thought, like Humpty Dumpty, it would be a problem to it back together.