

Outreach Director Report to the Board September 2024

Our involvement with the East Midlands STEM Hub has further developed and their project that will introduce children and young people to careers in aviation who otherwise may not have access to these ideas; has resulted in four hangar activity [Buckminster] days in October and four days in schools in November to young people from Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.

The costs for this will be covered by the DFT project grant. Some time was spent with Andy Symons in June planning these days and creating the photographs for the project activity instruction sheets which will be added to the website. The project website went live on 1st September and schools will be able to book a day from those offered. Each school will be given the opportunity to evaluate the activities and offer feedback. For the pupils who will be trainee aviators for the day they will complete their “pilots license “and offer their own views and opinions. This is a condition of the grant that was given.

It is envisaged that after evaluation of the planning, the carousel of activities will be available on the BMFA Flight School for all to use.

The annual Universities and Schools Payload Challenge in mid-June was again a well-attended and very successful event. There were entries for all five events including Team Platypi a UK home educated team from Sheffield and the Peak District who entered the Egg Lift Challenge and won. This was a very organised and disciplined team who was ably supported by the Dark Peak Club. It must be noted that the first three challenges [egg, cube and distance] were dominated by entries from China. This was also the case for the Quantity and Weight Challenges. Discussions are now taking place around how more universities and schools from the UK and Europe can be encouraged to compete next year. It may well be that due to concerns from sponsors that this will only be a UK and Europe wide project next year. A decision on this will be made soon.

It is also hoped that in 2025 that some Air Cadets will be able to compete in the Payload Challenge as the BMFA is now the approved and authorised body for fixed wing model flying for the squadrons. In August the BMFA was invited to attend the Cadets Air Space and Industry day. This was a successful day not just because we met many interested and excited cadets who were fascinated by the models on display and the simulators and who also appeared keen to know more about model flying; but also because of the connections made with other organisations.

In June I attended the FAI Education Commission meeting where ideas were shared around attracting young people to become interested in model flying and its inherent benefits. Many countries are experiencing similar outcomes to us and it was important to hear how other nations are looking at this. A database of ideas has been created and some of the ideas will be discussed at the next Areas Outreach Coordinators meeting. The FAI Education first bi monthly meeting will be held in late September.

The next Areas Outreach meeting will be held late September. There has been much discussion about creating a new competition for schools and colleges – a drone challenge. The proposal needs to be discussed by a wider team to look at its viability etc. Additionally the AMA also has their Heavy Lift challenge which uses a Hobby Zone Aero Scout which may also be worth considering particularly as a dedicated Air Cadet project.

Helen Jones
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