

AOPA UK

February/March 2024

HANGAR CHAT

AOPA magazine's new feature, where we visit the UK's airfields

AOPA REPORT

The AOPA board explains how it is working towards securing your right to fly

MAINTENANCE

Licensed Engineer Michael Powell on compression testing



Tecnam's multitasker

The Italian manufacturer goes upscale with its sleek, multi-purpose, twin-engine P2012. **Tom Horne** gets up-close and personal with the impressive aircraft



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THIS IS YOUR MAGAZINE, SO LET'S FILL IT WITH WHAT YOU LIKE

O MENTIONED in the last issue that I was interested to hear from members on how we can improve this magazine. Thank you to all of those who did reach out and send me suggestions. They have been taken on board and you will see some of the differences you requested – as well as the improvements you also wanted to see – seep in over the next issues. However, I would still like to hear from members – especially regarding the new section of the magazine: Hangar Chat. Hangar Chat is focuses on the airfields you're part of. The AOPA news team wants to come to your airfield and for you to tell us why it's a great location, why you like going there and what makes it unique. We'll even bring the biscuits.

In this issue, I was invited to Stapleford Flight Centre – a fantastic airfield if you've never visited before. Although mainly training the next generation of airline pilots, the café and bar was very welcoming and exceptionally busy considering I was there on a cold, but sunny, winter's morning. I would also like to thank Stapleford's Head of Training Colin Dobney for giving up his time to show me round the impressive site.

Elsewhere in the magazine Martin Jones has crunched the numbers from the members' survey and looked into what interests you and what your concerns are.

AOPA's CEO Martin Robinson has also put out a call for members who want to do more for the association. He's looking for regional volunteers who will be able to help out the organisation, whilst also receiving benefits back to help improve their flying as well – it's a win/win situation.

And the cover story this issue has been penned by Tom Horne, from AOPA's American office. He's been for a flight in Tecnam's multi-role, twin-engine P2012, and he was impressed.

As I said at the start of this comment piece, please get in touch with me as I really want this magazine to be something you look forward to reading.

Don't be shy, email me on editor@aopa.co.uk.

Blue skies! ■



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Articles, photographs and news items from AOPA members and other readers are welcome. Please send to the Editor. Inclusion of material in AOPA Magazine cannot be guaranteed, however, and remains at the discretion of the Editor. Material for consideration for the April issue should be received no later than 01 March.

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THE FUTURE NEEDS TO BE SECURE FOR GA

With so many crossroads on the horizon, it's time for decisions

AS I sit down to write this, 2024 has just begun and I sincerely hope that for all our members and industry colleagues it will be a good year.

You may recall from previous articles I referred to work that was done in support of publications like the GA Roadmap (Spring 2021), which essentially was a nod towards a government policy for GA.

These kinds of documents have a degree of importance, as what a politician says defines who they are in shaping government policy. Words are important because they either mean something or they don't, but even good words cannot support poor policy.

If we consider EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay System) a Space-Based Augmentation System and the UK Government's proposal to build its own SBAS system, what is clear is the level of complexity involved in this issue doesn't match the proposal. During a recent meeting in Parliament we were discussing a future solution for an augmented signal, again we pushed all the buttons on safety. Smaller operators like Loganair have expressed clearly the importance to their operations of being able to fly approaches to a lower minimum. In refreshing its fleet, Loganair enabled all its aircraft to have the capability of flying LPV approaches and they have expressed that the lack of the EGNOS service is having an impact on their operations, let alone the stranded investment.

GA has always benefitted from the UK navigation infrastructure, which was primarily designed to support commercial transport operations, NDBs, VORs, DME etc. and by using these NAVAIDs it does not add to their costs but improves the safety of some GA operations including reducing infringements. 20 years ago, a decision was taken at European and ICAO level to move from a terrestrial based navigation system to a space-based system. The

use of GPS signals across more users would mean that costs were shared by more users. We are aware that it is becoming more difficult for NATS to renegotiate leases on land where NAVAIDs are located, as landlords see bigger returns coming from housing developments. EGNOS provides greater signal quality and accuracy which allows the CAA to certify approaches as there is some ownership of the signal. The industry position is that the UK should retain EGNOS until a UK-only service is available. The CAA agrees that an augmented signal is desirable and have stated that until a UK signal is available it would make sense to retain access to the European system. With the assistance of the APG, letters are being drafted so that they may be sent to ministers, where we are asking government to reconsider its relationship with EGNOS. A Parliamentary Question (PQ) has also been tabled by Lord Berkeley. AOPA is involved with this issue because GA pilots with an IR(R) or an instrument rating need to be able to fly instrument approach procedures and more importantly they also need to be able to practice, but getting into airports with the right facilities is expensive and difficult to find slots. 20 years ago, I asked Sir Roy McNulty, the then Chairman of the CAA, to address this issue through enabling GPS approaches into appropriate GA aerodromes, however progress since that time has been glacial. The numbers of GA pilots seeking an instrument qualification has dwindled, although EASA recognised that the US has a better GA safety record primarily because of the higher numbers of GA pilots holding an instrument qualification. EASA has tried to establish a lighter touch or basic IR to improve safety amongst GA operators, however the UK seems to be standing still.

TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

There is a real possibility that there could be an election in spring 2024, which means the CAA is in the process

of briefing the opposition ministers so that any new government can align its manifesto to the work of the CAA to ensure there is continuity.

Many of the existing projects around aviation appear to be running out of funds and the ASM programme will need a lot more funding if it wants to implement any changes. The head of AAA explained that it is not just cash but also people with the right skill sets. He thinks that cargo drones are the most promising and that people carrying AAM aircraft are way off into the future. I can't help but agree with him. In the near term there is a possibility of a mandate for EC-based on 1090/978, outside of these frequencies ie Pilot Aware etc. We may find that some people may end up disappointed as they will have invested in solutions that are not compatible with the requirements of the airspace or international standards. Whilst a former transport minister may have had good intentions it's also probable that EC has been set back by at least three years.

NATS is in the process of developing a digital traffic management service, but it will take years to transition, furthermore we have no idea what new cockpit equipment GA will need to invest in.

On instrument approaches, ICAO and Europe is likely to require all instrument approaches to have vertical guidance from 2030. With the UK being stuck in the dark ages, it seems that without an SBAS service ILS is set to continue for the foreseeable future. This seems to be at odds with NATS looking to digitise the ATM system. I continue to point out that GA still uses VHF radios and barometric altimeters. If the UK cannot build its own SBAS service due to funding it will be a good idea to talk to a future government about getting back into EGNOS. Along with industry colleagues we continue to lobby government with the assistance from some members of the House of Lords. We know EGNOS works, the UK taxpayer has already invested in it so why build a UK only service? The reason we are out of EGNOS is purely



“NATS is in the process of developing a digital traffic management service, but it will take several years to transition”

political and therefore we must remove politics from good government. As far as I can tell there is no impediment to the UK getting back into EGNOS and whatever the ongoing costs are to the UK they must be lower than trying to build a UK only service. At the same time, we are still scrabbling to finish several non-precision GNSS approaches, since the CAA removal of CAP 1122 and introduction of CAP 1616, progressing GNSS for GA aerodromes has been slow and costly. The CAA has no financial skin in the game and seem to have no concern about the lost business opportunities for aerodromes whilst spending millions developing drones. We need to maintain a viable network of aerodromes and one way that might be achieved is through creating more business opportunities, NOT by building houses on them.

The Government has suggested moving to a single design entity for airspace, which came from the previous aviation minister Baroness Vere, but she has been replaced by Anthony Browne MP. Despite the change in minister, the CAA appears to be in favour of a SDE, as does the DfT. The missing bits are, who? And how? If the entity is appointed it will be by the DfT, however there may be a requirement to go to a tender process. CAP 1616 will still exist but the emphasis will be around carbon reduction. NetZero by 2050 will not be based on fuel alone. GA needs to develop a plan to get aerodromes involved with biodiversity and carbon reduction. Getting aerodromes to show their green credentials will be important and if government thinks we are serious it may be possible to obtain funding help.

You may have heard of the Trade and Co-Operation agreement that forms the basis of discussions with the EU. Currently the UK and EU are discussing safety and CAW issues as they relate to UK airlines, pilots and engineer’s licenses and ATCOs, however aerodromes and GA are not yet on the agenda, and it doesn’t look like they will be added any time soon. The DfT is aware that aviation has a shortage of skilled labour which is made worse as this shortage applies to other regions as well. We see European and Middle Eastern companies offering very competitive remuneration packages to attract skilled personnel. It’s not surprising then that AOPA is being approached from different directions to help tackle some of these issues. The CAA has suggested that maintenance businesses are coordinated under AOPA

to find solutions to these issues.

Can AOPA take on the CAW of the GA fleet? Could we establish a training and testing regime for UK GA engineers? Other states seem to have done so. The CAA must maintain a library for all certified aircraft around airworthiness notices and directives. This may be too big a task for an organisation such as AOPA, so we would need to discuss this with the CAA. It’s clear that the industry needs help without which CAW costs for our members will continue rise.

We have also been asked to support the Jet Heritage group who along with the HAA have similar problems when it comes to maintaining aircraft as those with the existing skills are becoming a rare breed – so something needs to be done if we are to keep the existing GA fleet in the air.

The Civil Aviation Authority has been consulting in respect of office fees and charges which is an annual event in the calendar. This year they propose an overall increase of 8.3%, where 3% has been earmarked to support innovation and future flight programmes. I hope it has questioned the proposals reminding the regulator that aviation pays their fees and charges from already taxed income and as such we cannot pass those fees on to a third-party unlike commercial operators. The CAA is required by law to charge the user (the beneficiary).

So, the addition of 3% will mean that with today’s charge, payers will be paying for tomorrow’s users, but I think it’s more to do with the gradual reduction in grants and other support funds coming from government. Allegedly anyone can apply for funding for innovation projects, which also means that GA could be applying for such funds, however the criteria for the funding is quite complex. Since COVID, the CAA is required to make their finances more resilient against future problems. As with all consultations, we can make as many points as possible but it doesn’t mean to say that the advice we give is followed by the regulator and as you may recall from COVID, GA was grounded by government on the grounds that it is a non-essential activity. ■



M Robinson

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Welcome to the UP FRONT section of the magazine. Bringing you help, advice, and other insights from the world of AOPA, in an honest and 'up front' way to help you stay flying. Something to say? Please contact us at editor@aopa.co.uk

WORDS Martin Robinson IMAGES Various

AOPA NEEDS YOU

AOPA CEO **Martin Robinson** would like to build teams of volunteers to help pilots in their local area

I WOULD like to establish some regional volunteers who can build local teams by engaging locally with pilots. The focus should be on aerodromes and airspace but not exclusively.

Having local knowledge that can be fed into a national picture will be very useful when responding to ACPs and planning matters (which may be helpful to John Walker who is our resident aerodrome expert). For volunteers, the task should not be too onerous or time consuming, therefore I would like to start with four or five regional volunteers plus a coordinator, providing information to AOPA so that we can build a good narrative at the national level. I also expect that volunteers will take part in shaping AOPA strategy and policy.

Volunteering offers numerous benefits. Firstly, it allows individuals to give back to their communities and make a positive impact and secondly, volunteering provides an opportunity to develop new skills and gain valuable experience. Additionally, volunteering can enhance one's social connections and create a sense of belonging.



Overall, volunteering is a rewarding experience that offers a multitude of benefits for both individuals and communities. Have you the time to help protect GA and see it grow?

We want to make sure you get as much out of volunteering as you put into it. That's why we will work hard to match your aims, goals, aspirations, personality, available time and everything else with opportunities in your area.

To make sure we're doing our job, every year we ask the people who volunteer with us to tell us what their volunteering journey has done for them. Throughout the year we shall hold several workshops to get your feedback, building a sense of connection to others in the community. You can help build regional activities which can be supported by AOPA.

When you're giving your time, skills and services, you deserve to get something back. We will offer training where it's needed and help you find all the resource and support you need. Whether it is gaining more skills and knowledge or making new friends across GA you will help us to develop the future needs of GA particularly at



AOPA has often relied on its army of volunteers

a time when we are trying to get to grips with airspace and the impact that new platforms may have on our freedom.

Every individual has their own reason for volunteering and their own ideas about what it will do for them. There's no right or wrong approach, it's all about exploring the opportunities on offer. Some see it as "giving something back" but the most important thing about volunteering is that you should enjoy it and that it's a rewarding experience for you and those you're helping.

If you think this is something you would like to become involved with, I would like to hear from you. So please send me a short CV and a few lines on how you would make a positive contribution as an AOPA volunteer - Email: martin@aopa.co.uk

In other news we are planning to host a members'

day (Fly In) and are in the early planning stages. It will be a social/activity-based event and if you have subjects that you would like us to address do drop me a line. If this proves popular then we can do several events around the country, it will be a chance to meet, chat and have a bite to eat as well as a couple of interesting discussions ending perhaps with an open forum. Adding to this, it is my intention to offer up some useful webinars on subjects directed by you the members.

The Flying Reporter will be continuing his activities supporting AOPA and again we are looking at ways to involve members, particularly if you have an interesting aircraft you would like to showcase or story to tell.

I am looking forward to meeting some of you in 2024 along with some new activities. ■

WORDS AND IMAGES Michael Powell

HOW TO CARRY OUT A COMPRESSION TEST OF THE ENGINE CYLINDERS

In part 10 of **Michael Powell's** series on what you can and can't do to your aircraft, the Licensed Engineer focuses on compression tests on the cylinders

ONCE AN aircraft has left the factory it immediately begins to deteriorate, due largely to the destructive action of corrosion, often aided by unhelpful actions on the part of the operator – often referred to as 'hanger rash'.

The Annual Inspection is generally when the cumulative effects of corrosion are detected and corrective action taken. However, deterioration also takes place within the internal components of the engine, but this is less invisible and therefore often overlooked. The manufacturer of the familiar Lycoming and Continental engines give a Time Between Overhauls (TBO) of 2,000 hours but these engines are generally still in service well past 2,000 hours under the schedule set out in GR24, which requires an inspection of the engine. This also includes a compression check of the cylinders every 100 hours. Similar remarks apply to other makes of engine although the TBO times may be different.

The piston rings and inlet and exhaust valves of the engine live a pretty hard life operating at high temperatures and valves – particularly exhaust valves – are subject to a high energy impact regime placing large mechanical demands on the valves, valve seats and exhaust manifold gaskets.

This article deals mostly with cylinder compression tests but it is worth mentioning that exhaust manifold down-pipes, exhaust mufflers and cabin heaters shrouds all call for a very careful inspection not less than annually. The inspection of cabin heater shrouds should be regarded as a critical item since a crack or similar defect could result in carbon monoxide fumes passing into the cabin with serious consequences.

In particular the owner/operator is advised to inspect thoroughly and with a high intensity torch, the exhaust gaskets. Any white powdery residue around the gaskets indicates a worn or damaged gasket allowing exhaust gases to erode the cylinder material around the exhaust flange. A new cylinder is expensive. If the gaskets require replacement then use the thicker gasket option.

The owner/operator is strongly advised to consult a Licensed Engineer before proceeding with a cylinder compression test (as described in this article) as this procedure is more technically demanding than the various actions covered in previous articles.

The results of a cylinder compression test give a lot of useful information about the internal condition of the engine. The test shows up worn piston rings, damaged



Ensure you've read everything properly and understand what you're doing before commencing a pressure test



valve seats damaged valves, worn manifold gaskets, cracked cylinders. The test is not difficult to do but requires the use of a differential compression tester (see photo) and a compressor with an output of not less than 140psi preferably with a dry-air filter.

THIS IS HOW IT IS DONE

Run the engine for five minutes to warm the cylinders and valves etc. A cold engine may give misleading test results.

Remove all top ignition plugs – note which one goes where. You may find this information is engraved on the ignition lead nuts but if this is not the case then one suggestion is to tie labels to the leads.

Next, ensure that the ignition switch is in the OFF position and the p-leads are connected

to the magnetos. Also ensure that the fuel selector is in the OFF position.

Starting with number one cylinder turn the engine using the prop to find top-dead-centre (TDC). This may be done by placing your thumb over the open plug hole and turning the engine slowly until pressure is felt and air is released. When pressure is no longer felt then that is top-dead-centre (TDC) rock the prop back and forth a couple of times to confirm. At this position both valves will be closed and the cylinder may be connected via the plug hole and adaptor to the compression tester.

At this stage it is sensible to employ an assistant to hold the prop still since when the tester is connected and air is applied the prop may attempt to turn and is capable of delivering quite a painful wack.

After screwing in the test-set adaptor and closing the test-set air valve then the test-set and compressor may be connected. If the shut-off valve is then carefully opened slightly air is allowed into the cylinder and may try to move the prop if the piston is not at TDC. If necessary the prop may then be turned carefully against the direction of movement until it no longer tries to move. This procedure is repeated for the other cylinders and your assistant should hang on to the prop until the test of each cylinder is completed and always standing in front of the prop.

When you have found TDC and your assistant is prepared, then slowly open the test-set shut-off valve fully and use the test-set regulator to set the input pressure to 80psi on the input gauge. Then read the value shown on the output gauge. If the output gauge reads 65psi or above then we have a good cylinder. If it reads below 65psi then we have a problem

“If leaking air is detected from any of the points checked and the gauge reading is less than 65 psi then a Licensed Engineer should be asked to repeat the checks”

– this may be narrowed down by carrying out the following actions. A ‘normal’ reading would be in the region of 72psi

Retaining a hold on the prop to prevent it from moving. Place your ear, carefully, over the end of the exhaust muffler down-pipe (this assumes that it is not hot). If you can hear air leaking then it suggests a worn or damaged exhaust valve or valve-seat. A similar check may then be carried out at the air inlet box.

Carry out a similar check listening for leaking air through the crankcase breather tubing. Any escaping air indicates worn piston rings or a cracked cylinder.

If leaking air is detected from any of the points checked and the gauge reading is less than 65 psi then a Licensed Engineer should be asked to repeat the checks and advise on the required corrective action.

If leakage is confirmed then the cylinder may have to be removed and overhauled by a suitably qualified Licensed Engineer.

Finally, refit the top ignition plugs and plug leads. Apply a small amount of copper grease to each plug thread. Torque the plugs to 30 lb/ins. ■



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YOUR HERO

A step up from one of the most popular training aircraft is why the **Piper Arrow** is this issue's Hero

IF YOU trained on a Warrior and now fancy moving up to something a bit faster and more complex, then the Arrow is a logical choice. It's the more powerful brother of the Warrior, with retractable undercarriage, a constant-speed prop and the ability to operate as a true four-seater.

Jump in the Arrow and you'll feel at home, with the same controls and feel. It costs a bit more to maintain with the gear and prop but the upside is higher cruise speed and better load lifting ability.

The Arrow has been around for 45 years now, and it's solid all-metal construction and easy handling make it a natural family choice. ■

Send Your Hero to editor@aopa.co.uk. It doesn't have to be your own aircraft... own it or admire it from afar, either way we want to know what's Your Hero and why. Just send us around 100 words, and your top 5-7 'fast facts' and we'll do the rest. ■



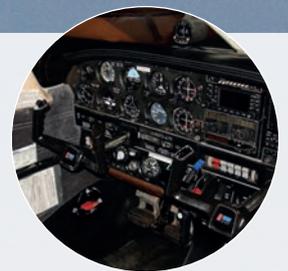
1. UNDERCARRIAGE

Regular inspections of the retractable gear are necessary, particularly if operated off grass runways.



2. CABIN

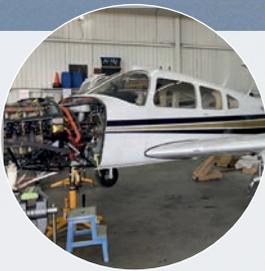
It's a true four-seater and is comfortable inside



3. AVIONICS

As with any older aircraft, the avionics and wiring can date and need replacing. But it is a fantastic IFR platform.

IMAGES: Various



4. SUPPORT

With more than 32,000 built there are recourses everywhere for the Arrow including a product and spares support network.



5. PERFORMANCE

It benefits from a safe flying characteristics and has great short-field performance.



6. RETRACTABLE

A very handy feature, but can add to the cost.



WORDS Nick Wilcock

DAVID COCKBURN R.I.P

Friend and colleague David Cockburn sadly passed away at the beginning of the year. His friend **Nick Wilcock** shares his story

IT IS with very deep regret that we recently received the sad news that our friend and colleague David Cockburn passed away in early January as a result of illness.

David had served in the RAF as a pilot from 1968 - 1995 and flew a variety of aircraft during his career, notably as a Jet Provost instructor teaching both pilots and aspirant fast-jet navigators. He also flew the Chipmunk on photo-reconnaissance operations in the Berlin Control Zone in support of The British Commanders'-in-Chief Mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany (BRIXMIS), an activity which was not without considerable risk.

David was also an enthusiastic glider pilot and instructor throughout

his career, but is mainly remembered for his excellence in GA flight instruction and examining, exhibiting a cheerful friendly yet professional manner to all his students, whose interest he held dearly. He was formerly the CAA's Safety Promotion Officer and was responsible for writing the Authority's Safety Sense Leaflets. David worked tirelessly to promote aviation safety, his work being very highly regarded by very many aviation organisations. He was also an aviation author of note; for example, writing a complete set of manuals supporting theoretical knowledge requirements for LAPL and PPL applicants.

For many years David was an enthusiastic member of the AOPA Training and Education Committee, notably providing

“David worked tirelessly to promote aviation safety, his work being very highly regarded by very many aviation organisations”

significant CHIRP points of note to the committee. In more recent times, David helped to develop the LAPL/PPL e-Exam syllabus questions and answers for the CAA. His work in supporting EASA professional licensing theoretical knowledge requirements brought a level of excellence to the working group, ensuring the questions and answers were fit for the intended purpose. He was also a committed member of the CAA's Licensing and Training Simplification Working Group, helping to shape the future of GA pilot licensing.

David was a true stalwart of GA with a lifetime of enthusiasm for aviation and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time. ■

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 - Navigational skills, new/current radio navigation aids • Airmanship •
 - Weather related topics, methods of distribution • Human factors •
 - Additional topics selected by the competent authority •



For further details contact the AOPA office on **020 7834 5631** or email **mandy@aopa.co.uk**.
You can also register for the seminar online at **www.aopa.co.uk**

WORDS David Rawlings IMAGES Courtesy of Stapleford Flight Centre

TIME FOR YOU TO VISIT A NEW AIRFIELD

In a new series, the **AOPA Editorial team** will be visiting the airfields of the UK to give you an insight into each location, and why you might like to visit. First up: Stapleford



MANY historic airfields surrounding London they were used by the RAF in WWII, and Stapleford is no different. So let's start at the beginning of the airfields life, before we talk about its current incarnation as one of the country's (and Europe's) leading professional pilot training schools.

BACK TO THE START

Stapleford first opened its doors in 1933 as an airfield for Hillman's Airways, which later became part of British Airways. Hillman's offered flights to major European cities. Once Hillman was bought out it left just a few remaining private owners at

the airfield.

Shortly after the start of WWII the airfield was requisitioned and renamed RAF Stapleford Tawney and became a satellite station for North Weald. So anything that was going to wreck the runway at North Weald would land at Stapleford instead.

No. 151 Squadron was the first to use Stapleford on a regular basis. It started patrols towards the end of August. During its short stay, the squadron lost six aircraft and two pilots. One of them was squadron leader Eric King who was killed in action on the 30th of August. 151 squadron then moved to Digby in Lincolnshire for a much-needed rest. The

“Stapleford Flying Club is now operated by Mr. John Chicken and remains one of the few family-run flying clubs in the UK”

squadron was dogged by ill-luck; on the 4th September Pilot Officer Richard Ambrose was killed when his aircraft struck a crane on take-off for Digby and burst into flames. P.O. Ambrose is buried in Epping cemetery.

Long after the war, In 1953, Roger and Buster Frogley transferred the Herts and Essex Aero Club from Broxbourne in Hertfordshire to Stapleford Tawney. The hangars were renovated and they began flying Tiger Moths and Austers. In 1955 Edgar Percival – the famous pre-war aircraft designer – set up a company at Stapleford under his name and started a production line for his EP9 crop spraying aircraft, a total

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ICAO EGSG RUNWAYS

One grass RWY28/10,
one tarmac RWY 21L
& 21R/03L/R Grass

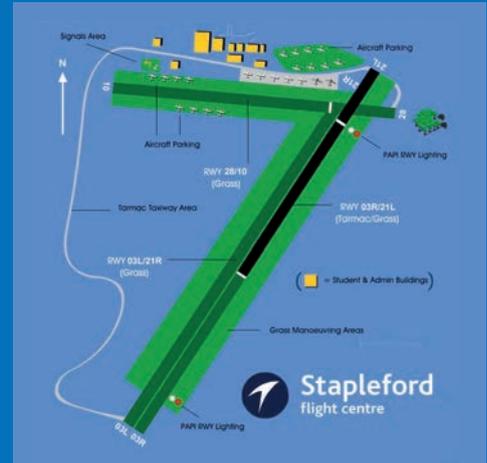
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1 x Cessna 172
2 x Diamond DA42
2 x Diamond DA42
(Sim)
8 x Piper PA-28
3 x Piper PA-28R
1 x PA34
3 x P2007 Tecnam
1 x Slingsby Firefly T67



The top of the range ALSIM being used in foggy conditions



Memorial to the brave pilots who flew from RAF Stapleford Tawney during WWII

of 40 aircraft were built.

Although still owned by Herts and Essex, Stapleford Flying Club is now operated by Mr. John Chicken and his daughter Pamela, and as such Stapleford Flying Club remains one of the few family-run flying clubs in the UK.

A PROFESSIONAL OUTFIT

The AOPA news team arrived at Stapleford on a sunny, cold January morning to meet Stapleford Flight Centre's Head of Training Captain Colin Dobney, who would be showing us around the impressive site.

Colin himself is a former Stapleford student who progressed as an instructor and then onto the air-charter

side of the business. He left to fulfil his ambition to fly for an airline, firstly for Sabre Airways on B737-200 then onto Ryanair as a First Officer, and then a Captain. He then flew as Captain on the B737 NG with Astraerus.

In 2000 he returned to Stapleford to take up the post as Head of Training. With approximately 15,000 hours – of which over 5,500 are flying Boeing 737 aircraft – his flying activity at Stapleford is mostly in an examining capacity for commercial students and IR renewals. He also manages and teaches Stapleford's MCC courses

Stapleford Flight Centre has been training private and commercial airline pilots for

over since 1969. Many of its students have gone on to enjoy a career in the airlines, whilst others have become flying instructors themselves.

"We used to be mainly a flying club, but we're now predominately a commercial pilot training centre, but we have a large contingency of private owners and PPL hirers," explained Colin. "It does get very exciting here in the summer, we get a lot of pilots visiting and sit on the patio or in the garden. The café is very good and popular. Lots of people come in for Sunday lunch."

The airfield is fantastic for visitors with plenty of aircraft parking and a lovely, fully licenced bar, that was busy

on a Wednesday morning when the AOPA team arrived. And not just with pilots, there were young families there and senior citizens all enjoying an early lunch, and the food smelt great.

The flight centre is busy all year round and currently has between 70 and 80 students that are at various stages of their commercial training. "Many of our students come from London which is close by," said Colin. "We do offer accommodation as well, which is subsidised so students travelling from further away are also able to train here."

THE FLEET

Stapleford has a large training fleet of aircraft, which can be

hired out to club members of the airfield as well. “We have Cessna 152s, Piper Warriors and three Tecnam P2008s as well. The Tecnams are lovely little aeroplanes, and the PPLs who get checked out on them, love them. They’re just not as strong as the Cessna 152s. It’s a shame Cessna don’t build them again because they had the formula right,” said Colin before continuing with what else is in the fleet. “We also have Diamond DA42 Twinstars for the Instrument rating. And for the fearless pilot and UPRT we have a Slingsby T67 Firefly which is a former aerobatic military trainer.”

Stapleford also has a building dedicated to simulators with the very latest ALSIM ALX Medium-Jet Flight Simulators. When installed at Stapleford, it was the first in the UK, and one of only five in Europe. “We have

two DA42 simulators which we use for the IR and we use the ALX for MCC (Multi-Crew Cooperation). We offer enhanced MCC courses in a flight model which, although generic, has many features of the Airbus A320. We also launch a combined MCC and JOC course as well as standalone JOC courses. It is a big investment for Stapleford so we are keen to utilise the ALX on all aspects of training. In addition to light and medium jet models with EFIS (Electronic Flight Instruments Systems), it has the benefit of conventional instrument and EFIS mode for SEP (single engine piston) and MEP (multi engine piston) training.”

Stapleford is pretty self-sufficient as they have a huge maintenance facility on site. We’re also Cessna and Piper agents. Unfortunately, since Diamond have come under

new ownership, Diamond agents are very few and far apart. “Engines for the Diamond aircraft are the bane of my life. We have two DA42s, the engine life isn’t long enough and there is a 13-month waiting list. So, we’re having to put in another order in for engines, even though we only changed them a year ago. If we don’t put the order in now, we’ll have to ground them next year.”

LICENCE

To ensure Stapleford’s students have the best chance to start their career in the airlines the school has taken the decision to offer EASA and UK licences. “A lot of our students are choosing to do both, but it means they have to do two sets of exams at the ATPL level. The problem lies with the IR. The rules are that if you’re going to apply for an EASA IR you have to partially train in Europe and your IR test has to start and finish in European airspace. So it means we have to fly over to France, land, do the test, land and then come back. That’s the rules, that’s fair enough. But after they return, they need to do further IRT for UK IR because EASA test won’t count. So, they have to do a second IR test with a CAA designated examiner in the UK,” explained Colin. “We aim to get our students to the stage where they leave Stapleford with a frozen ATPL and all the basics they need to put in front of and be accepted by an airline recruiting for first officer pilot positions. We’ve been lucky over the years; I would say that 75 per cent of our pilots end up at a certain budget airline. We train to

“Stapleford also has a building dedicated to simulators with the very latest ALSIM ALX Medium-Jet Flight Simulator”

a high standard and that is appreciated by the airlines.”

FLYING IN

Due to Stapleford’s location, there are significant amounts of restricted airspace areas around TZ, but it is well worth flying in, even if it’s for a cup of tea in the club house. “We have Southend, Stansted, London City, Luton and the London TMA directly above us. We are fairly restricted, so we tend to take off and go to the North East, that’s where our training area is. Although there is a lot of airspace controlled by Southend, we find they are quite amenable, so all we need to do is ask for entry into their CTAs and normally we are accommodated.

“We’re lucky we have both grass and tarmac runways. When I first flew here in 1987 it was just grass and at this time of year, we would’ve just been sitting down looking out the window hoping for it to dry. It was a big investment to lay hard surface runway in the early 90s. People training here don’t pay landing fees, and for visiting pilots it’s not expensive, so come and check us out,” concluded Colin. ■



A busy clubhouse – even at 11am on a cold Wednesday



Preflight checks for an instructor and student

“It does get very exciting here in the summer, we get a lot of pilots visiting and sit on the patio or in the garden. The café is very good and popular. Lots of people come in for Sunday lunch”



AOPA NEWS

The charity offered more than 100 scholarships in 2023



SCHOLARSHIPS

AIR LEAGUE SCHOLARSHIPS OPEN

The charity organisation has opened its doors for those looking for a leg-up in the world of aviation

FOUNDED IN 1909, the Air League is the UK's leading aviation, aerospace, and space charity that changes lives. It breaks down the barriers into these industries through its scholarships and outreach programmes.

The Air League inspires, enables, and supports the next generation of aviation, aerospace, and space professionals from all backgrounds. By bridging the gap between education and industry the Air League impacts communities across the United Kingdom. Through its programmes and projects, the Air League increases social mobility, breaks down the perceived barriers and acts as a catalyst to spark the inspiration and realisation

that opportunities and possibilities are accessible to anyone.

The Air League supports the UK's aviation and aerospace industries through Parliamentary events and position papers which articulate the advanced technologies and crucial industry skills which are vital to the economic success of the UK. The Air League's annual programme of events and lectures provide members with insight across a broad spectrum of subjects and a unique networking opportunity.

Last year the Air League handed out 107 scholarships and over the past decade scholarships and bursaries worth over £2 million have been allocated to young people across the UK.

“The Air League inspires, enables, and supports the next generation of aviation, aerospace, and space professionals”

“2024 will see again changes to our scholarships and bursaries for which we will endeavour to deliver the maximum impact to our beneficiaries. New opportunities are already being introduced that will enhance the career pathways of future pilots, aspiring engineers and many other professional aviation disciplines,” said an Air League statement.

The Air League offers the broadest range of scholarships and bursaries in the UK, with over 120 opportunities being awarded

annually. They cover such topics as flying, gliding, drones and engineering.

The applications for scholarships opened on the 29th January and close on 07th April. For more information visit airleague.co.uk ■



One of the 107 scholarship winners from 2023

ELECTRONIC CONSPICUITY REBATE SCHEME TO END

THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY has stated that it will end its Electronic Conspicuity Rebate Scheme on 31st March 2024.

The scheme was set up back in 2020 for GA pilots to claim 50 per cent rebate on the cost of purchasing an Electronic Conspicuity device, up to £250.

Pilots are being urged by the UK Civil Aviation Authority to act quickly to benefit from a scheme allowing them to claim a rebate of up to £250 towards devices that can improve safety and situational awareness.

The devices can help

improve pilot awareness of other aircraft such as planes, gliders, helicopters and drones to avoid collisions and increase airspace safety.

So far, the Department for Transport-funded programme, administered by the UK Civil Aviation Authority, has given out almost £1.8million in funding to thousands of pilots since its launch in late 2020.

Jon Round, Head of Airspace, Aerodromes and Air Traffic Management at the UK Civil Aviation Authority, said:

“The Electronic Conspicuity Rebate

Scheme has been crucial in advancing aviation safety in light aircraft.

“These devices have been proven to help pilots to mitigate the risk of mid-air collisions, as well as being a key enabler for the safe and efficient integration of airspace users.

“We’ve seen thousands of pilots take advantage of the scheme, and with limited time left, we urge eligible pilots to apply to the rebate scheme to benefit from the contribution towards such devices, enhancing their situational awareness in the skies.”

Visit the CAA's website to start your rebate. ■

New competition

British Aerobatics has launched the British Aerobatics Open Championship for Advanced and Unlimited pilots from around the globe. The new competition will take place on 10-14 July 2024 at Sywell Aerodrome.

Sporty's head to retire

Hal Shevers, founder of world-renowned Sporty's Pilot Shop, is retiring along with his wife, Sandy, after more than 60 years in the business, so they can spend more time together.

Caravan on road

A Cessna Caravan made an emergency landing on a busy freeway in Virginia. There were no injuries, and the plane is intact but damaged from collision with a guard rail.

CIRRUS LAUNCHES G7 WITH TOUCHSCREEN DISPLAYS

Cirrus announced the newest generation of the SR Series G7. The SR Series G7 aircraft features touchscreen interfaces, large high-resolution displays, advanced safety systems, improved visibility, increased legroom, enhanced convenience features,

and the Cirrus IQ mobile app that provides remote access to real-time health and readiness indications for your aircraft so you can travel faster, safer and smarter wherever you go.

This simplified yet powerful flight deck reduces pilot workload while offering enhanced

situational awareness for both pilot and passenger. Cirrus has aligned the flight deck, cabin experience and training programmes, including its Private Pilot Programme, to provide a progression from learning to fly and owning a SR, all the way to the Vision.

Zean Nielsen, Chief Executive Officer of Cirrus Aircraft said: “We have developed a comprehensive ecosystem within the company, providing flight training, maintenance and support to ensure our owners have a seamless ownership experience. Our aircraft are designed with people in mind and the new SR Series G7 is a testament to that philosophy.” ■



The SR series G7 will benefit from touchscreen cockpit displays

ELECTRIC

COMPANIES JOIN FOR FIRST AIRFIELD-TO-AIRFIELD EVTOL FLIGHT WITH RECHARGING

Skyfly and AeroVolt will collaborate on demonstrating the first ever eVTOL flight between two different airfields in 2024

SKYFLY WILL work with electric aircraft charging company AeroVolt to conduct the UK's first airfield-to-airfield eVTOL flight in 2024, exclusively using AeroVolt's operational public charging network.

The Axe eVTOL boasts an impressive range of 100 miles in a fully electric configuration or 300 miles in a hybrid configuration – far more than most other private eVTOLs, which are generally single-seat aircraft with a range of than 20 miles.

AeroVolt is installing a network of aircraft smart

chargers around the United Kingdom at airports and aerodromes. The company has set up five operational sites already and is due to have 24 operational by the time deliveries of the SkyflyAxe eVTOL begin in 2025, with plans in place for 60+ sites. However,

AeroVolt's public charging network further increases the flexibility of the Axe by enabling fast, hassle-free charging at various major General Aviation airfields such as Brighton City, Lydd, Dunkeswell, Bournemouth, Dunkeswell, Solent Airport and Sandown.

“We are delighted to partner with AeroVolt, who have developed by far the most advanced aircraft charging network in Europe, if not globally. It shows the UK's appetite for low cost, low emission and low noise flying. We cannot wait to demonstrate this capability on a real flight route which will hopefully prove to the non-believers that electric aviation is the future of mobility. Skyfly wants to make the United Kingdom a leader in aviation again” said Michael Thompson, CEO, Skyfly.

AeroVolt began rolling out its first tranche of charging stations at airfields across England in August 2023. In total, agreements have been

“AeroVolt began rolling out its first tranche of charging stations at airfields across England in August 2023”

signed for the installation of 60 stations around the UK.

Skyfly and AeroVolt will conduct test flights as part of the feasibility demonstrations for electric aircraft. The tests will also confirm the compatibility of the Axe with AeroVolt's charging and monitoring software.

“AeroVolt is really excited to be working with Skyfly. The Axe is a really forward-thinking design in the emerging eVTOL market. The availability and usability of a charging infrastructure is key for their customers and future development and AeroVolt is ready to offer support however we can. We can't wait to see the Axe flying later this year,” explained Alan Kingsley-Dobson, COO, AeroVolt.

Following this year's tests, AeroVolt will take delivery of their own Axe eVTOL in 2025. The aircraft will be available for members to hire, and will also be used for demonstrations, network development and testing. ■



The Axe could become the first eVTOL aircraft to take flight in the UK



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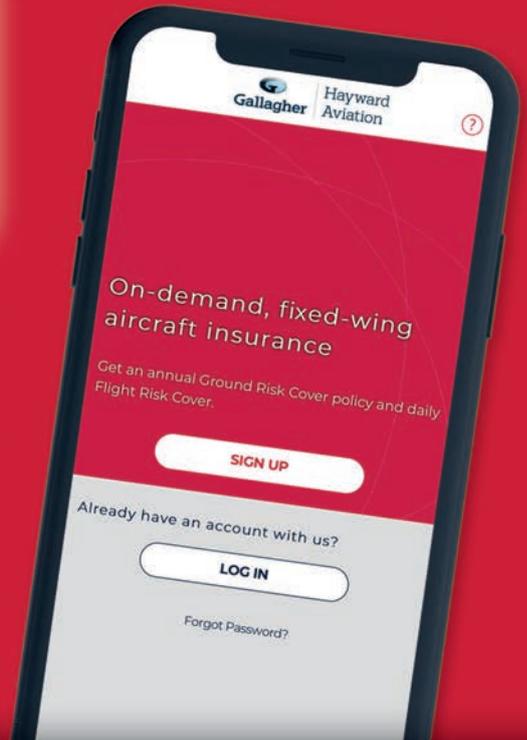
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CERTIFICATION

ICON RECEIVES TYPE CERTIFICATION

The FAA has granted Type Certification for the ICON A5 in the primary category, marking a significant milestone for the company



WITH THIS designation, ICON Aircraft is now one of only a few Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) manufacturers in the world to meet the certification standards of the FAA, meaning that ICON can now take advantage of reciprocal agreements between the



The Icon A5 in flight

FAA and aviation governing bodies outside of the U.S. – including those in Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America – to certify the A5 to operate in these regions.

Jerry Meyer, CEO of ICON Aircraft, expressed his enthusiasm for this accomplishment, stating, “Receiving FAA Type Certification for the ICON A5 in the primary category is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the entire ICON team. It allows us to expand our market potential around the world, and it underscores the commitment of ICON Aircraft to innovation and excellence in design.”

Meyer continued, “The ICON A5 offers an unparalleled blend

“We are grateful for the collaborative partnership with the FAA throughout this process”

of performance, safety, and versatility, and we are confident that it will captivate the imaginations of new customers and enthusiasts as we expand our sales and marketing presence outside of the U.S. We are grateful for the collaborative partnership with the FAA throughout this process, and we extend our sincere thanks for their commitment to safety.”

The ICON A5 is a state-of-the-art amphibious aircraft designed to empower adventure-seekers

with a new level of freedom and versatility. Its innovative design allows it to take off and land on both water and runways, providing pilots with unparalleled access to destinations.

With FAA Type Certification in hand, ICON Aircraft is poised to enter a new phase of growth and market presence. The company looks forward to delivering on the growing demand for the ICON A5 and continuing to set new standards in the general aviation industry. ■

ALL YOUR NEWS ON THE MOVE

CHANGED YOUR EMAIL or recently set one up? Let us know via the AOPA UK website (*Membership, Change of Details*), and keep up-to-date on all the latest news and more.

Update us now at www.aopa.co.uk

VAN'S RESUMES SHIPPING, 65% OF OWNERS RENEW ORDERS

VAN'S AIRCRAFT says 65% of customers have agreed to pay more for their kits and more than 100 of those kits have now been shipped. The company, which went into bankruptcy a month ago, says it's ramping up kit deliveries but is still buried under email enquiries. "Our shipping throughput will increase over the coming weeks, and we will post progress updates," the company said in an update posted Saturday.

Van's also said it's tackling the parts order backlog that resulted from supply chain issues over the last

couple of years. "Our supply chain has been improving and we have team members working with our suppliers to continue to drive improvement in this area," the update reads. The company says it's also started directly contacting 1,800 customers who have major structural parts that have laser-punched rivet holes that will be replaced by the company. "All affected customers will be sent an email containing a list of affected parts for each kit they have received," the update said.

The company says it's also working with third-

party suppliers regarding orders for kits that included engines, avionics and propellers and had hoped to have some news regarding those orders this week but bad weather in Oregon forced closure of the plant for three days. "The planning that is currently underway includes a look at scheduling, lead times, payments, pricing, customer deposits, and more," the update said. "We are working to have our plans shared by the end of next week with those customers who have open orders for engines, propellers and avionics kits." ■

50% pay rise for Southwest

Southwest pilots have voted to accept a five-year term that will give them a 50% wage increase. In the first year, they get a 29.15% bump followed by increases in the next three years.

ATC fatigue study

The Federal Aviation Administration in the US has announced it has established a three-member panel of experts to explore the specific elements of fatigue among air traffic controllers.

Boeing ups its QC

Boeing says it is beefing up its quality control efforts and allowing inspectors from airlines into its factories to examine its future aircraft in production.



ROBIN AND CAP AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION TAKES OFF

IN EARLY December last year, CEAPR re-hired half of the staff from the Robin Aircraft company and have resumed production of new DR401 and re-manufactured Robin and CAP aircraft at Darois in France. Orders are being taken with a one-year lead

to delivery for the 401.

R&D, parts supply and airworthiness services are completely unaffected and continue as usual. CEAPR has been operating for over sixty years. Its core business is design and approvals, parts manufacture and

maintenance. CEAPR owns the land and the buildings at its facility in Darois, as well as the Robin and CAP Type Certificates and the Robin Aircraft name. CEAPR have APDOA, Part CAO, Part 21G and it makes or buys all of the components for Robin and CAP aircraft. ■

Andy Thompson

The Air Ambulance pilot explains what a day at work is like for him



Andy Thompson *Captain Andy Thompson started his career in the Royal Navy. Since leaving in 2004, he has worked in San Francisco as a flight instructor as well as with the police and news crews. Before joining London's Air Ambulance, he spent five years flying to oil rigs and boats in the North Sea for Bristow Helicopters.*

”

Q What's your company vehicle at the moment Andy?

A At present we're flying MD902 Explorer helicopters, G-EHMS and G-LNDN. This model was specially selected for its suitability in an urban environment; they are small, with no tail rotor, which allows us to operate safely in an area as complicated as London. They are getting on in years now, so we're set to replace them with two brand new Airbus H-135's in the Autumn 2024, which will present an exciting new challenge for us pilots.

Q So, how does your day start? Is it at the hospital?

A Perhaps surprisingly, my working day doesn't start at our helipad on the 17th floor of Whitechapel's Royal London Hospital. After pouring myself a strong coffee, I'll leave home and head instead to RAF Northolt in Ruislip on the very edge of Greater London, where our helicopter stays overnight. We don't want to keep our helicopter at our helipad overnight where it would be exposed to the elements and staying at Northolt offers us the chance to refuel and ensure the helicopters get any maintenance they might need.

Q What happens when you've got to Northolt and had your coffee?

A We'll do our standard pre-flight checks, including a look at the day's weather. Whilst the Air Ambulance service operates all year round, poor visibility or extreme weather can make it effectively impossible for our aircraft to

do its job on certain days. If the conditions aren't great, our medical colleagues will use our service cars to keep the service operational whilst we wait at the airfield, ready to spring into action if we get a good window of weather. Assuming all is well, we'll take off and make the 15-minute flight from Northolt to Whitechapel. As commutes go it's pretty spectacular, as we fly West to East, passing the many skyscrapers of the City of London before landing and being greeted by our fire crew at the helipad.

Q How long are you on shift for?

A We operate from sunrise to sunset, meaning our working hours are longer in the summer and shorter in the winter. How busy those days are can vary quite considerably – on some days we might only get called out once or twice, but the service attended nearly 2,000 incidents over the course of 2022 so as you can imagine some days are very full on.

Q How quick do you have to be when the call comes in?

A Speed is of the essence from as soon as the callout comes through. We are only ever called out to the most severe trauma cases in London and a delay of even a few minutes can be the difference between life and death. As a result, our team move towards the helicopter rapidly and we aim to take off within a couple of minutes of the job coming to us. The captain for the day is the first one to the helicopter,

preparing it for takeoff as the rest of the team makes the necessary preparations. Our co-pilot will receive further details of the job through on our iPad, including details of the location of the incident and as much information as there is about the prospective patient.

For all missions the two pilots are joined up to three medical personnel – a consultant, a doctor and an experienced London Ambulance Service paramedic. Once they are on board, they will strap in and put their flight helmets on as the pilots confirm with our helipad fire crew that we're clear for takeoff.

Q How do you decide a landing spot?

A I've been doing this job for just over a decade now, so I do have the benefit of knowing from experience what sort of things to look out for. Anything wide and open like a public park or a school playground is perfect, but sometimes we're forced to be more creative and land somewhere you might not expect. We've landed in a few of London's football stadiums and, whilst they are an ideal spot for our team to land in and get to the patient, the groundsmen have been less than pleased about what we've done to their pitch! Most of the time it's about finding a new landing spot that best suits the needs of the patient, but in central London's more touristy areas we do have some established landing spots that we find ourselves using a few times such as the British Museum or Trafalgar Square. ■

POOLEYS

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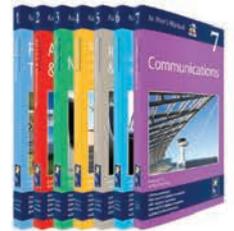
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Tecnam's multitasker

Italian manufacturer goes upscale with its sleek, multi-purpose, twin-engine P2012. **Tom Horne** gets up-close and personal with the impressive aircraft

WORDS Tomas A. Horne
IMAGES Tecnam

FAST FACTS

2016

FIRST FLIGHT

1,670

RANGE (KM)

2.6m

PRICE (EUROS)

W

HEN ASKED what the most recently introduced multi-engine piston aircraft is, some might say the Diamond DA62. Some might say Tecnam's Rotax-powered P2006T, certified in the United States in 2010, and aimed at both the training and special-missions markets. Those are good guesses, but the correct answer is yet another Tecnam twin – the new P2012 Traveller, a multi-role, fixed-gear

heavy-hauler powered by two turbocharged 375-horsepower TEO-540-C1A electronically controlled engines. The aeroplane first arrived in the US, where I'm based, when Cape Air, a Barnstable, Massachusetts-based regional carrier that serves Cape Cod and other Northeast destinations (as well as Florida and the islands in the Bahamas and Caribbean), ordered Travellers to augment its fleet of Cessna 402s. Today, Cape Air operates 27 P2012s,



**The multipurpose P2012
makes a great puddle-jumper**

three more will arrive by the end of 2021, and there are options for 75 more.

I caught up with the P2012 at the National Business Aviation Association's convention in Las Vegas. It was fitted out in its nine-seat airliner configuration, and Tecnam Sales and Development Manager/ Experimental Test Pilot Francesco Sferra gave me the rundown. The electronic engine control system (EECS) is the big news. It's an electronic, microprocessor-controlled system that continuously monitors and adjusts ignition timing, fuel injection timing, and fuel mixture based on the current operating conditions. This eliminates the need for magnetos and manual adjustment of the fuel-air mixture, and electronic controls enable single-lever engine controls in the cockpit.

Meanwhile, dual-channel power boxes and engine

control units manage power distribution. During engine start, battery power turns the engines and powers the spark plugs and ignition coils, and runs them until reaching 1,000 rpm. Above 1,000 rpm, a dedicated permanent magnet alternator takes over to power the electronic engine control unit, the ignition system, and engine sensors. What do the sensors measure? A lot: throttle position, crankshaft speed, camshaft speed, oil temperature and pressure, manifold induction air temperature, fuel pump pressure, fuel temperature, cylinder head temperature, exhaust gas temperature, turbine inlet temperature, and compressor inlet pressure. Plus a lot more. There's even a knock sensor to detect detonation in each cylinder.

All this technology means less pilot workload. There's no mixture control, no magneto switches, an automatically

“All this technology means less pilot workload. There's no mixture control, no magneto switched, an automatically set optimal mixture and ignition timing...”

set optimal mixture and ignition timing for any power setting or altitude, and automatic oversight of all engine parameters. To start an engine, flip the battery and ignition toggle switches on, then push a start button. The EECS has figured out the ideal fuel-air mixture, so the engine fires up in a matter of two to three seconds. And yes, that includes hot starts.

Flying The P2012

After the convention, the P2012 went on tour to introduce the aircraft to a wider American market, and four were aboard: David Copeland, Tecnam's U.S. sales director; Sferra; AOPA Senior Photographer Chris Rose; yours truly; and a lot of baggage. First stop: Camarillo, California, for photos, then on to Long Beach, California. Our takeoff weight was 7,600 pounds, of which 1,000 pounds (about 150 gallons) was in fuel, and 500 pounds in



1. The Tecnam P2012 in flight
2. For a fixed-gear commuter/multi-role aeroplane, the P2012's lines are sleek as can be
3. The massive aft cargo door accepts most palletised loads and also serves as a passenger entry

The P2012 is nimble in the air, despite its size





*“Steep turns,
stalls and slow
flight were easy
to master, as were
power-on stalls”*



Could the P2012
replace the
Cessna Caravan
as an island
hopper?



bags. Not a problem, though. Maximum takeoff weight is 8,113 pounds. Like I said, the P2012 is a heavy hauler.

Part of the pre-takeoff checklist includes a check of the EECS. It's a matter of pressing and momentarily holding two buttons on the PFT (preflight test) subpanel. This begins an automated runup that not only checks the EECS but also the output from all those sensors mentioned above. It also does a mixture leaning check that determines the setting for best power on takeoff. If a minor issue is detected, the TLO (temporary limited operations) lights come on; it's safe to fly, but a maintenance check is required in the next 20 hours. The primary (PRI) and secondary (SEC) NTO (no takeoff) lights mean just that.

TAKING OFF

For takeoff the drill is to set takeoff flaps, stand on the brakes, go to maximum

power, then accelerate to a VR of 75 KIAS. After liftoff, retract flaps and pitch to the VYSE of 92 KIAS, then to the 120 KIAS cruise climb. Based on the runway lights zipping by, I'd say we broke ground in about 1,500 feet, and climbed away from Las Vegas' Henderson Executive Airport at 700 fpm under 50 degrees Fahrenheit/10 degrees Celsius/ISA +7 conditions.

We leveled off at 8,500 feet, set 72 percent power with 39 inches of manifold pressure and 2,150 rpm per side, and settled into a 161 KTAS cruise burning 25 gph per side. Then came a climb to 10,500 feet to clear terrain, where cruise at 68 percent power, 39 inches of manifold pressure and 2150 rpm yielded 158 KTAS on a fuel burn of 23 gph per side. The P2012's Garmin G1000 NXi showed three hours of remaining endurance—plenty of reserve, since the entire trip to Camarillo would take only an hour and change.

“Part of the pre-takeoff checklist includes a check of the EECS. It's a matter of pressing and momentarily holding two buttons on the PFT (preflight test) subpanel”

Dialling the power back to 55 percent, we saw 147 KTAS and the fuel burn went from 23 to 18 gph per side—that's about a 25 percent drop in fuel consumption for losing a mere 11 knots.

Before long, we were past the San Gabriel Mountains and descending toward the California coast, leveling off for some airwork. Steep turns, stalls and slow flight were easy to master, as were power-on stalls. Buffeting kicked in at 52 KIAS with the nose pitched up 30 degrees. The angle of attack (AOA) indicator was deep into the red arc, but the ailerons remained effective even in the stall, thanks to the washout (spanwise alteration in the wing chord) that kept the wing tips flying with the inboard wing sections stalled.

That AOA indicator would come in handy for the upcoming landing. Landings are simple in the P2012, thanks to the single-lever power controls, automated



1. The fixed gear aircraft can haul up to nine passengers
2. The large cargo door makes it easy for passengers to enter
3. The two Lycoming engines offer plenty of power

mixture control, and fixed gear. Power back to 100 knots or so on downwind, extend full flaps on final and slow to 80, then 75 knots or so for the flare; at heavier weights, VREF speeds can be as high as 89 knots. You can use the AOA indicator to confirm the proper airspeed—you want to keep the AOA needle at the 0.6-unit indication. That’s right at the dividing line between the white and amber arcs. Over the threshold, hold it off and roll it on. A word of caution: Don’t be too quick to yank the throttles back to idle. The propeller blades will flatten out and make for a sudden deceleration that can end with a noticeably firm arrival. Best to wait until you’re inches above the runway.

Tecnam is a well-known brand in Europe, with a history dating back to 1948. That’s when brothers Luigi and Giovanni Pascale founded the company and designed their P48 two-seater. (The “P” prefix in Tecnam aircraft stands for Pascale; the numerical

designation represents the year the aeroplane was designed.) Over the years, more than 5,500 Tecnam lightplanes have been sold, but spotting one in the United States can be rare. The P2012, its 6,000-nautical-mile squawk-free inaugural tour, and an expanded presence are meant to change that. The company’s assembly centre in Sebring, Florida, should soon be augmented by offices in California, Arizona, and Texas.

The aeroplane’s combination of simplicity and capability offers a less expensive alternative to bigger, more expensive, and turbine-powered utility twins. Its optional TKS ice protection system, oxygen system, and Garmin GWX75 weather radar give it all-weather capability. Its interior can accommodate as many as seven different versions. There’s the seven-seat executive interior with club seating, in-flight entertainment system and Iridium GSR56 for phone calls and texting; nine-seat

“Over the years, more than 5,500 Tecnam lightplanes have been sold”

airline version; a cargo version; a passenger-and-freight “combi” layout; plus medevac, parachute jumping, and special-mission options. Some 50 P2012s are in service worldwide, with passenger models at not only Cape Air, but at Zil Air in Seychelles, in Taiwan as an air ambulance, and in short-haul operations in Argentina and Germany.

Add in other new projects, like the P-Volt, an electrically powered version of the P2012, plus the P2006T electrically powered model, and the Tecnam factory in Capua, Italy, is staying busy. It has a family feel and a personalised approach to manufacturing. The current CEO, Paolo Pascale Langer, is Giovanni’s son and Luigi’s nephew, and his son – also named Giovanni – is the current managing director. As for Sferra, he personally flies each aeroplane that rolls out the door, evaluating their individual stall characteristics and placing their leading-edge stall strips in just the right location. ■

TECH SPEC Tecnam P2012

BASE PRICE: €2.6M

SPECIFICATIONS

Crew: one or two
Seats: 7-9
Powerplants: (2) Lycoming TEO-540-C1A, 375 hp
Propeller: (2) four-blade MT composite, 6.4 ft dia

Length: 38 ft 7 in
Height: 14 ft 5 in
Cabin length: 13 ft 9 in
Cabin width: 4 ft 9 in
Wingspan: 46 ft
Wingloading: 29.6 lb/sq ft
Empty Weight: 5,040 lb
Max Takeoff Weight: 8,113 lb
Useful Load: 3,117 lb

PERFORMANCE

Takoff Distance (50 ftobstacle): 2,596 ft
Rate Of Climb: 1,200 fpm
Max Cruise Speed: 194 KTAS
Cruise Speed 10,000 ft: 173 KTAS
Service Ceiling: 19,500 ft
Landing Distance: 2,438 ft
Ground Roll: 1,198 ft





The P2012 can be flown with a one or two person crew

Flying and being an aircraft owner is why we're all here – and we want it to stay that way



WORDS Martin Jones

SECURING OUR FREEDOM TO FLY

The **AOPA Board** wants you to know how the organisation is ensuring your right to fly as a GA enthusiast

YOU MAY recall that early in 2022 The Board of BLAC (T/A AOPA) started a piece of work in defining the ongoing strategy of AOPA. An initial presentation was given to the Member's Working Group in 2022 which provided useful feedback for the Board. With this further feedback we now have a strong baseline plan to work from and further develop over the coming months as the strategy continues to evolve.

It is now time we shared some of the plans to give you an appreciation of the direction we would like AOPA to go in, while continuing to engage with our members and continuing to seek your input to setting achievable goals.

OUR MISSION

Mission statements are often simply treated as management waffle but it is essential we have one as it cements our purpose in an easy to remember manner. After much debate we have settled on "Securing our freedom to fly" which is almost identical to that of IAOPA and AOPA in the

USA. We settled on "securing" as it's a positive statement as to what we are about and is more positive than "protecting" as we wanted to be seen as a progressive and forward think organisation. Its "our" freedom to fly rather than "your" to emphasise the greater community we operate within.

STRATEGY STREAMS

There are three main streams to our work; Influence, Information and Assistance. This is to reflect the strong position AOPA has as an influencer of policy and regulation across the whole of the General Aviation community. It also reflects the services we provide to our members both in terms of information, be that be provision of a training syllabus, regulation updates or more reactive assistance through personal advice, legal support and the "Ask AOPA" service.

VISION

But what's the end point? That's articulated in the Vision which is summarised as "AOPA delivering outcomes for members by improving the GA environment". Behind that there are two detailed

"Our individual membership survey confirmed that our members fly predominantly piston engine aircraft"

paragraphs that discuss the vision for AOPA itself and the GA environment as shown below. I'm sure you may have your own view on it but hopefully you will see much in it you agree with even if we are some way from achieving it right now.

WHO DOES AOPA REPRESENT?

We have had much debate on who we represent and what is General Aviation and have created our own picture of what this means to us and what differentiates us from other organisations. Our individual membership survey confirmed that our members fly predominantly piston engine aircraft, from small single engine aircraft through to twins, and include Instructors/examiners, students with many members owning a share in an aircraft or owning it outright.

We also supply key services to our corporate members who are predominantly flying clubs/schools, maintenance organisations and aerodrome operators.

We must continue to provide our membership, individual and corporate, the services that they joined AOPA for

and ensure all those who are not members are attracted to AOPA for our services, be that advocacy, information or assistance.

We need to continue to review our membership groups and identify opportunities to add to our existing membership, growing our membership and reflecting the changing GA environment. It is fundamental to AOPA, perhaps uniquely, that we remain independent and are only influenced by our members, while advocating for the greater GA community where we can. This may include working, or collaborating, with other organisations on certain issues to bring the influence we need.

There is much good work already going on here, including licence simplification and aircraft maintenance and our representation on a range of bodies, helping to secure your freedom to fly and protecting our vital infrastructure.

KEY OBJECTIVES

We have set out three key

strategic objectives;

- Develop and deliver an influencing agenda in support of members interests and the GA community as a whole
- Ensure a sustainable AOPA
- Develop a range of membership services to add value to all our members.

This is underpinned by:

- Good quality communications and engagement with our membership, and other organisations where there is a benefit to AOPA.

We have also broken down our influencing agenda into a series of themes and this is perhaps better represented by the figure below.

Many of the items will be familiar to members and align well with our existing Training and Education Working Group and the Maintenance Working Group. These will continue to focus in on a range of topics including licence simplification and unleaded fuels amongst their priorities.

We have introduced themes around both airborne and ground-based infrastructure to recognise the key threats and opportunities we see in those

“We are currently working on a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) agenda for AOPA to take part in”

areas.

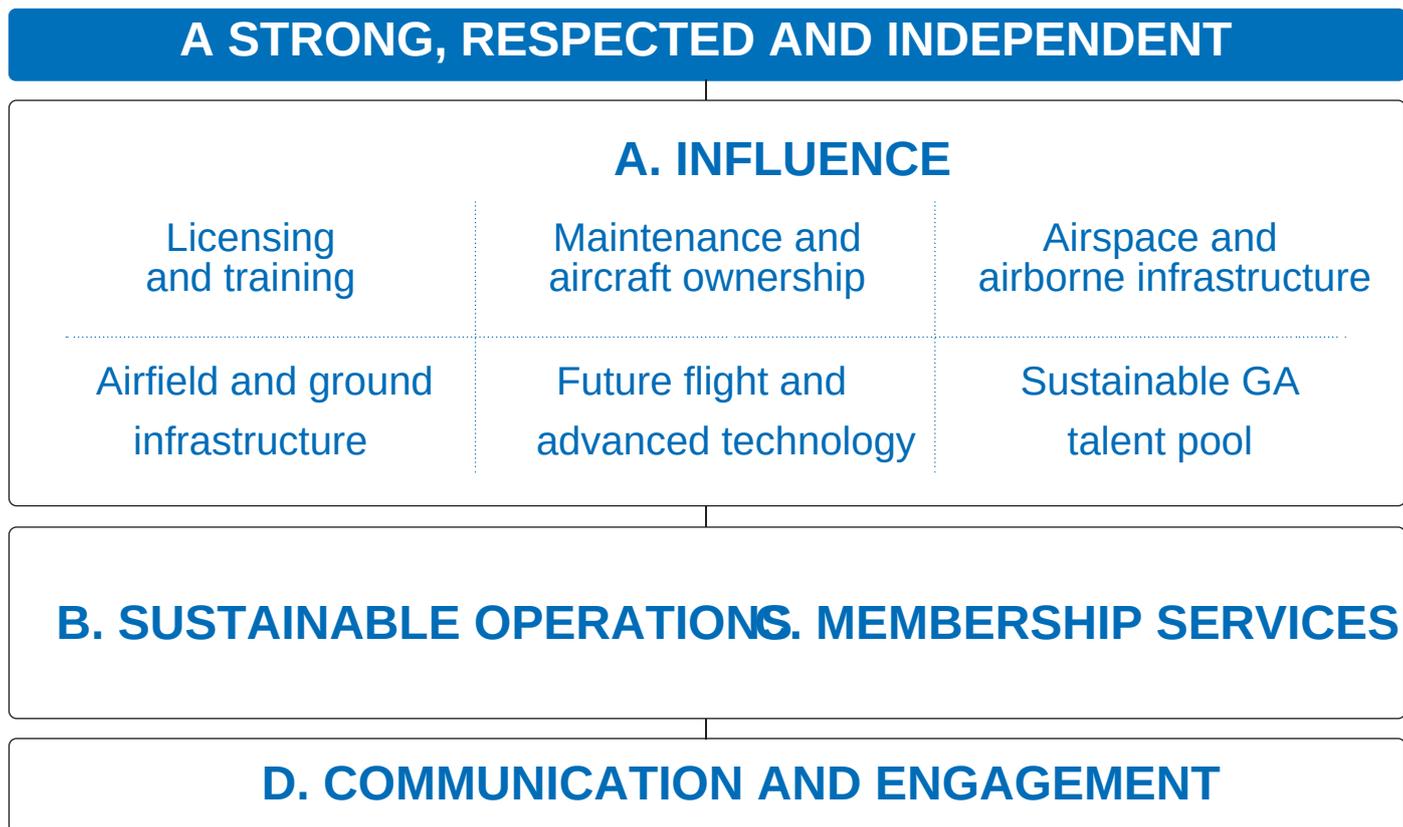
We have added a future flight/ advanced technology reflecting our need to be proactive in legislation and benefits from the new technologies and platforms emerging.

We have also added a theme for developing a sustainable talent pool for General Aviation to ensure future GA engineers and instructors are being trained and see GA as an attractive employment opportunity.

LOOKING AHEAD

It is very early days on this and we are currently working on a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) agenda for AOPA to take part in.

There is much to go at in this field and we need to develop more robust plans and only take on what we can and we will probably partner with others to help deliver this agenda. We will be discussing this more in the next few months and will publish our more detailed plans later in the year. Whilst influencing externally on behalf of members and the



GA community is important we can only do this if the AOPA operation itself is efficient, we deliver services that members will pay their subscriptions to access and we communicate and engage with members and the GA community.

We are fortunate in having a new building to operate from as well as some significant investment reserves, but we need to ensure our operation is more sustainable both financially and environmentally.

We have already invested in the building to become more self-sufficient in electricity and are beginning to look at some changes to make us more financially effective through reduction in costs, but most importantly increasing revenue through growing membership or other income streams. We are also looking at how best to resource this plan to enable us to deliver our potential ambitions.

Some of you may have noticed we have recently been more proactive in advertising in various publications and sponsoring several activities including the airfield reviews

from The Flying Reporter, all aimed at increasing our profile and attracting new members. We are already seeing a return on these initiatives with an increase in membership of over 10% in the current financial year.

We also hope to be able to offer more services to you all and utilise improved engagement activities through modern technology and media routes, although this will be dependent on increased revenue which in the main, comes through increased membership numbers.

CHANGES

At the last AGM, Pauline Vahey stood down as Chairman and Mick Elborn was elected as Chairman of the Board of BLAC Ltd. Martin Robinson remains as the CEO of AOPA. The BLAC Ltd Board of Directors will concentrate on running the company, with financial and compliance oversight of AOPA, rather than the day to day running of AOPA. Members are still welcome to put themselves forward to be appointed as a director of BLAC to assist in

“We accept we have much to do to turn the strategy into hardnosed plans and subsequently move towards our vision. We will need your support to deliver those plans”

ensuring compliance to the legal responsibilities of the company.

The CEO will be responsible for the running of AOPA, including establishing a new AOPA Policy and Strategy Committee, in addition to the individuals providing expert subject advice and the working groups. More information will be communicated as the structure develops and members will be asked to express an interest in joining that new committee.

We accept we have much to do to turn the strategy into hardnosed plans and subsequently move towards our vision. We will need your support to deliver those plans and we will strive to provide better services to you as members. As these plans develop, we will share them with you and seek your inputs and support to deliver them. In the short term, the best support you can give us is by being advocates of AOPA membership and sharing the benefits of membership with your friends and helping us secure our freedom to fly. ■

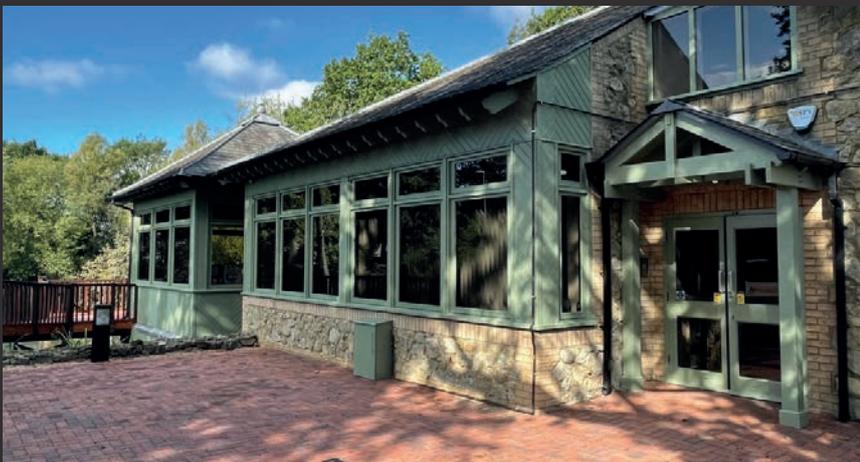
Our vision

AOPA UK is a strong, respected and independent organisation at the heart of the GA community, influencing organisations and supporting members in the pursuit of their aims.

Our valuable membership services attract new members to AOPA, drawn from a broad range of GA activities. We engage with members and other organisations through high-

quality communications allowing the movement of information in and out of the organisation. Our assets are secure and are utilised to the benefit of our members and to develop the organisation and sustainably grow our activities.

General Aviation pilots, aircraft owners, businesses and aerodromes can undertake their flying and associated activity in an efficient, effective, environmentally sustainable and safe manner. Regulation is proportionate and simple to understand. Aerodromes are vibrant places supporting both the aviation and wider communities with infrastructure and related businesses. There is a vibrant and diverse flow of new private pilots, instructors and aviation businesses, ensuring a thriving GA community.



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