

General Aviation

April 2012

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Published by: Richmond Aviation,
The Studio, Kettys Close, Withiel, Bodmin,
Cornwall PL30 5NR. Tel: 01208 832975.
Fax: 01208 832995

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Design: David Tarbutt
Printing: Holbrooks Printers Ltd

Articles, photographs and news items from
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Material for consideration for the June issue of
General Aviation should be received by
1st May, 2012

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Published by AOPA, which is a member of the
International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot
Associations.

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Front cover:
Pup and Bulldogs
Photo: Keith Wilson

Chairman's message

European involvement is important

Two significant events in the AOPA calendar took place simultaneously on Saturday 10th March. The first was the briefing on the Olympic airspace structure jointly organised by the Royal Institute of Navigation and the CAA held within the capacious lecture theatre of the Royal Geographical Society's headquarters at South Kensington. This attracted around 400 delegates, many of whom would have been AOPA members. AOPA UK had contributed a donation towards the running of this event, and it is particularly pleasing to learn that this meeting was so informative and successful. The second was the Regional Meeting of IAOPA Europe, held on the same day, although arranged long before the Olympic airspace meeting, at a hotel near the Tower of London. This attracted about 40 delegates from 18 European countries including a strong supporting contingent of six from the IAOPA headquarters in Frederick, USA.

I am not normally an attendee at the IAOPA Europe Regional Meetings as AOPA UK CEO, Martin Robinson, is our delegate, and indeed IAOPA Senior Vice President, so my involvement is not needed. However, since this meeting was in London, I welcomed the opportunity to join in and witness the proceedings at first hand and have the opportunity to provide a small contribution on the current state of the EASA Part M deliberations. The meeting was ably chaired by Martin, and reports on the discussions of the many agenda topics may be found within these pages. But I take the opportunity here to mention some of the highlights and observations that personally struck me. Although the responsibility is considerable, it is also of great benefit to AOPA UK that we currently shoulder the leadership of the region. Also, having the CEO of our own CAA, Andrew Haines, address the meeting was something the delegates could never expect to happen in their own countries. Aside from this, the meeting took me back strongly to days back in the early 1980s when I became deeply involved in what is known as the European Rotorcraft Forum. Since 1975 this annual forum has been the rotorcraft community's premier event bringing together some 300 delegates from the manufacturers, research centres, academia (me!) operators and regulatory agencies to discuss advances in research, development, design, manufacturing, testing and operation of rotorcraft. As one of the members of the organising committee for a period of many years, and occasionally chairman, one of the most engaging and fascinating aspects was coping with, and harnessing to the common good, the various national characteristics of the main country participants involved, namely, France, Germany, Italy the Netherlands, Russia and the UK. One quickly learnt that stereotype characteristics do exist for real!

This is not to say that stereotypical national characteristics were much in evidence at the RM, time was too short for that. There were almost twenty separate items on the agenda covering a multitude of topical matters and burning issues. For me, two items happened particularly to attract my attention. One of these popped out from the SESAR review and this was the huge difference in maturity of the use and application of GPS-based approaches between the USA and Europe. In the former, more than 3000 WAAS approaches are implemented compared with seven LPV (Localiser Performance with Vertical Guidance – ILS look-alike) approaches currently in Europe. At the same time, the rapid popularity and scope of the iPad and similar devices looked like being a game-changer in the future. Until the number of such approaches in Europe increases dramatically, there is unlikely to be much incentive for aircraft owners and/or their aircraft to become suitably equipped. The other item that struck me was the presentation by the representative from Italy on the newly established 'luxury' tax regime that was described in the February edition of *General Aviation*. It was clear, based on real statistics, that the tax will only produce a tiny fraction of the expected result, but it was amusing, and possibly stereotypical, that the rather expensive and luxurious business jets belonging to senior Italian politicians were exempt from the tax!

Engaging with our European counterparts is absolutely vital these days in view of EASA, with its increasing, and increasingly overbearing, influence on all areas of general aviation, and the other important developments, such as SESAR, if we are to maintain the viability of general aviation for future users. Thus, I consider AOPA UK's financial contributions to IAOPA and IAOPA Europe to be extremely good value for money, and, as a member whose subscription partly goes towards both, I hope you do too!



George Done